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Archibald MacLeish

THE POET ON CAPITOL HILL

by

Morton D. Zabel

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PARTISAN REVIEW

VOLUME VIII, No. 1 JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1941

THE POET ON CAPITOL HILL (PART I)	1	*Morton Dauwen Zabel*
FAREWELL CHORUS	20	*David Gascoyne*
READING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT	24	*Dwight Macdonald*
NIGHT RAID	33	*Desmond Hawkins*
FUNCTIONALISM AND NAIVE MATERIALISM IN AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE	34	*Alan Mather*
NOTES ON A JOURNEY	47	*Robert Fitzgerald*
ART CHRONICLE	55	*George L. K. Morris*
WHAT HAS BECOME OF THEM? A CHECK-LIST	59	*William Petersen*
BOOKS		
An American in Spain	63	*Lionel Trilling*
The Double Agents: Provocateur	67	*Allen Tate*
The Light That Failed	69	*Bertram D. Wolfe*
The Renaissance of the Little Mag	72	*Clement Greenberg*
LETTERS	77	

Editors: F. W. DUPEE, CLEMENT GREENBERG, DWIGHT MACDONALD, GEORGE L. K. MORRIS, WILLIAM PHILLIPS, PHILIP RAHV. Business Managers: NANCY MACDONALD, WILLIAM PETERSEN.

PARTISAN REVIEW is published at 45 Astor Place, New York, N. Y.

PARTISAN REVIEW is published six times a year. Subscription: $1.00 yearly; Canada, $1.15; other foreign countries, $1.30. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Copyright January, 1941, by PARTISAN REVIEW. Reentered as second-class matter, January 20, 1940, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

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The Poet on Capitol Hill

Morton Dauwen Zabel

I

DURING THE PAST eighteen months Americans have witnessed an event that constitutes an unmistakable milestone in their cultural history. A poet has become a national leader—not a poet of mere household or academic honor like Whittier, Longfellow, or Bryant and not a leader of dishonored prophecy and unacknowledged legislation like Whitman, but a poet of recognized standing and a leader of official rank. Mr. Archibald MacLeish has been made Librarian of Congress. He has been saluted by the President of the United States and received the nation-wide acclaim of press and public. He has signalized his unprecedented honor by publishing —under the titles *America Was Promises* and *The Irresponsibles*[1] —two addresses to his fellow-citizens on the destiny of their nation and the duty of its people. His further speeches on American ideals and institutions are being printed by the United States Government Printing Office.[2] Nor have these writings followed the tradition of conventional ceremonial amenity. They are a poetic call to arms, a rallying-cry for the American way of life, an indictment not only of the powers of darkness that threaten Democracy in the old and new worlds but of Mr. MacLeish's own fellow-writers and scholars, "the irresponsibles" who "freed themselves of the personal responsibility associated with personal choice. They emerged free, pure, and single into the antiseptic air of objectivity. And by that sublimation of the mind they prepared the mind's disaster."[3]

"Nothing," says Mr. MacLeish, "is more characteristic of the intellectuals of our generation than their failure to understand what it is that is happening to their world."[4] Indulging their taste for objective truth, morbid self-examination, and disillusioning criticism, some of them have written a poetry of despair and disgust, others novels that "were not only books written against the hatefulness and cruelty and filthiness of war. They were also books

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filled with passionate contempt for the statements of conviction, of purpose and of belief on which the war of 1914-18 was fought. . . . The post-war writers whose work educated a generation to believe that all declarations, all beliefs are fraudulent, that all statements of conviction are sales-talk, that nothing men can put into words is worth fighting for, and that there is a lowdown to everything—those writers must face the fact that the books they wrote in the years just after the war have done more to disarm democracy in the face of fascism than any other single influence."[5]

An indictment of writers and scholars equal in severity to this has seldom been heard in public places in modern times, in America or elsewhere. Perhaps the maledictions of Hitler and Goebbels alone have surpassed it within living memory. It revives the decree passed by Plato against poets in *The Republic*. Mr. MacLeish, having already honored his literary profession and his government by bringing these hitherto unreconciled forces into the harmony of his own personal success, has honored his age by making a moral pronouncement on the duty of the artist to the state which will cause his name to resound in the records of history. His contemporaries owe him the honor accruing to a remarkable feat of personal heroism and originality, and his texts the duty of close study. The honor has been loud and nation-wide during the past year. Perhaps the moment for studying his words more closely than a first hearing permits has now arrived.

The idea that the poet is the enemy, outcast, and "marked man" of society is apparently fixed in the history and moral doctrines of Western culture at the depth of fetish, but when we see at close range the actual fortunes and opportunities of poets, the public enthusiasm they have aroused in the literary revival of the past quarter-century and the popular adulation heaped on characters like Frost and Miss Millay, it's hard to believe that the idea is still current among serious thinkers. Yet while our age has given its poets a favor and publicity beyond the privilege of earlier generations, its serious use for them remains uncertain and suspect. They're all right as long as they behave, keep their place, stay out of the way, and stroke the public ego at the right moment. But for a poet to maintain a serious critical reputation, to draw practically all the available public honors and channels of influence into his

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service, and to crown his labors with the fame of a public man, a patriotic orator, a defender of Democracy, an officer of the state, and a recognized spokesman of his nation, is a feat—a whole system of feats—for whose like one gropes vainly among the records of modern art. Yet Mr. MacLeish, at the age of forty-eight, has done all these things.

He has lamented the disappearance of Miltons and Voltaires from public life and is fully aware of his dazzling opportunity. He realizes how much latent American hostility to art and literature has been defeated by his own success. By an extraordinary case of the felicity of tragic events, the violent straits in which European humanity found itself plunged in the fall of 1939 materialized at precisely the right moment to give him his chance to impress on his fellow-citizens the fact that a Milton not only should be living in this hour but by miraculous good fortune *is*.

In fact, it's hard to keep up with him these days. He has always been a man of many parts but now we begin to understand why his favorite Greek myth is that of Proteus.[6] He has addressed audiences and banquet tables in many parts of the republic. The Pan-American Union, the Cranbrook Foundation, the Adult Education Council, the Stockbridge Musical Festival, and the Congress of American Writers in the heydey of the People's Front have all heard his voice. It has sounded at the laying of cornerstones, the unveiling of plaques, the dedication of libraries, at commencement exercises, and before many clubs and forums. He has been a Bones man at Yale, a student of law at Harvard, a Left Bank emigré in post-War Paris, an editor of *Fortune*, a curator of the Nieman Fund at Harvard University, an endorser of books and of Henry B. Luce's *March of Time* movie, *The Ramparts We Watch* (a paste-up job of old news-reels and amateur acting that will doubtless figure to future historians of the present crisis much as the war-scare films of J. Stuart Blackton and similar propagandists figured in the public hysteria that culminated in the War of 1917). The Luce papers have told how he has even found time to become a ghost-writer for our national political leaders, Secretary Ickes's Fourth of July speech on the big razzberry laugh of the Americans having shown traces of his hand and accent. From the part he played among the esthetic exiles of Paris during the 'Twenties he passed without embarrassment to his share in the work of the

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League of American Writers during the 'Thirties. His literary productions include lyric verse, epic, satire, elegy, defenses of poetry, a ballet, poetic drama, verse-plays for radio, book reviews, essays, expert technical journalism, a canvass of the religious interests of American youth for *McCall's Magazine*, articles on labor and civic issues for the *Survey Graphic*, political and literary criticism for *The Nation* and *New Republic*, articles in *Life* and *Fortune*, and an edition of the papers of Justice Frankfurter, a former teacher of the poet, whom *The New Yorker* has rudely described as having "wangled" his former pupil's latest job for him.[7] He has been saluted as "a poet, a scholar, and a gentleman" by President Roosevelt, and hailed by Dr. Herbert Putnam, at a banquet in the Knickerbocker Club of New York, in terms of richest encomium:

> There is first the Scot in him—shrewd, austere, exacting, but humorous. There is the poet in him—whose stuff is not made of mere dreams but of realities—the contrasts of beauty and ugliness, joy and despair, success and failure. Then the humanist, keenly sympathetic to all that calls for social sympathy. The lawyer—trained to analysis through determination of exact issues. The soldier, pledged to duty under discipline. The athlete—pledged to fair play. And finally there's the orator, capable of vivid and forceful speech.[8]

Thus equipped Mr. MacLeish arrived in the autumn of 1939 at his present post in Washington. He did not arrive there unprepared or abashed. He sees his destiny as divided yet united in its aims. He is both poet and librarian, and for both these professions he makes what are unquestionably the highest claims that have been heard in our century—claims enhanced to the pitch of evangelical eloquence by Mr. MacLeish's burning sense of how desperate and tragic the century has become:

> We live in a time of crisis . . . a crisis not of the hands but of the heart. It is a crisis of hunger—but not a crisis of hunger created by any doubt as to our ability to feed ourselves. It is a crisis of cold—but not a crisis of cold created by any doubt as to our ability to put roofs over our heads or clothes on our backs. . . . It is a crisis in other words of which the entire cause lies in the hearts of men. The failure is a failure of desire . . . a failure of the spirit: a failure of the spirit to imagine; a failure of the

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> spirit to imagine and desire. . . . This failure of the spirit is a failure from which only poetry can deliver us. . . . Poetry is art, and, being art, committed to this earth, confined within the shallow water of this air. Its matter is what men can see and sense and know. . . . Its end is man: not men alone, not men in secret—men as they are different,—men turned souls and grown distinguishable for eternity, but man. The common loveliness that all men everywhere have known: the common fears: the common passions: the despairs. . . . Poetry alone in such a time as ours when all the images are blurred and doubtful, when men go starved because they cannot wish in common—poetry alone imagines, and imagining creates, the loyalty for lack of which we cannot live; for lack of which we cannot even eat, be covered and be warm. . . . For what is lacking in the crisis of our time is only this: this image. Its absence *is* the crisis. . . . The defense of poetry in this time is a challenge. It is a challenge to all those who quarrel about the means by which the people shall be saved to hold their tongues and be silent until the poets shall have given the people speech. It is a challenge to all those who would stop the mouths of the poets with their pantry notions of pure poetry and their gentleman's gentleman's Standards of what a poet does, to hold their tongues and be humble until the poets have been heard . . . [The poet may bring] the mind of this nation one step nearer to an understanding of its will, and one step nearer to an imagination of the world in which it can believe and which, believing, it can bring about.[9]

It might be supposed that one such mission in life would keep a man's hands full, but Mr. MacLeish proclaims his second calling no less vehemently:

> Those who, like myself, assert that the threat to democratic civilization in this country is the threat of fascism mean that the culture of the Republic is threatened by the existence in the United States of the kind of situation which has produced fascism elsewhere, and that that situation in the United States has already given indications, human and other, of developing in the known direction. . . . It is this issue, as I see it, which is presented to American libraries, for it is upon American libraries that the burden of this education must fall. It cannot fall upon [the schools . . . the newspapers . . . the magazines . . . the book publishers . . . the radio . . . the screen]. But this burden CAN be entrusted to the libraries. . . . The libraries, in brief, are the only institutions in the United States capable of dealing with the contemporary crisis in American life in terms and under conditions which give promise of success.[10]

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Swept as he is by the zeal of his callings, the supremacy of his responsibilities, and his dramatic sense of world crisis, it is no wonder that Mr. MacLeish should have risen to indict American writers and scholars as "irresponsibles," men who "prepared the mind's disaster," and whose work in disarming democracy in the face of fascism surpasses "any other single influence."

Poet, scholar, gentleman, and librarian, he has become a major American prophet and Voice of Destiny. He is a phenomenon of our time and culture, and his case bears looking into.

II

When a man appears before the public as convinced of his mission of salvation as this—when he addresses his contemporaries in terms of stinging rebuke and indicts their cynicism as Americans and their irresponsibility as thinkers—we naturally ask for his credentials. We look (especially in these days of intellectual strain, emotional violence, and public terrorism) to the consistency of his arguments, his past performances as thinker and citizen, and his record in matters of sincerity and logic. Our age is rich in political and spiritual conversions. It is crowded with warring leaderships. We have seen every conceivable variety of quick-change act, trapeze-swinging, and bandwagon-jumping, and expounders of new truths and revelations are subjected to a scrutiny less urgent in heartier times. It is true that Mr. MacLeish does not encourage such inspection. "My development as a poet is of no interest to me and of even less interest, I should suppose, to anyone else," he said seven years ago,[11] but, as was remarked at the time, what this statement lacks in candor it makes up in optimism.

However, if he insists, we shall not go back to his poems, whose "statements of conviction, of purpose, and of belief" are necessarily conditioned by the subtleties and complexities of the poetic medium. We turn to utterances that enjoy the advantages of direct and unequivocal declaration—to his prose. Here we may expect to find evidences of responsibility that are not involved in the difficult agony of the poetic experience. He admits that he too lapsed from responsibility in the post-War years. "I am not undertaking to judge these writers. I have no right to judge them. And if I did my hands would be tied because I felt as they did and

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wrote, in so far as I was able, as they were writing."[12] He is also prepared for criticism:

> Those who wish to see us weak will employ every means of deception, of misrepresentation, and of fraud to keep us so. They will suggest to us that we cannot defend ourselves against fascism without ourselves becoming fascists. They will tell us that we cannot assert our belief in the institutions of a free society and our intention to defend them, without . . . becoming ourselves burners of books and regimenters of men's minds. We can believe them if we wish. But if we do believe them we will have lost not only our courage but our common sense.[13]

Some critics have actually risen to suggest these alternatives. Edmund Wilson has risked the imputation of deception, misrepresentation, and fraud by defending the "irresponsibility" of Dos Passos, Hemingway, and Barbusse, by saying that Mr. MacLeish's "fear of destroying the integrity of 'the Word' . . . is exactly as if a banker were to consider it against his interests to warn the authorities that there was counterfeit money abroad," and by remarking that "it does not create reassurance, at this moment of strain and excitement, to hear the Librarian of Congress talking about 'dangerous' books."[14] Burton Rascoe is much blunter. He says that "Archie in his newly fashionable incarnation has the same idea as Hitler but doesn't know how to express it"; that *Mein Kampf*, indeed, expresses the same notions: "that men should not be coddled; that they should be made to realize that the State is more important than any individual; that you can't have a healthy State unless you have most of the clucks drilling in barracks squads; that you must put the women back in the kitchen; and that all this sentimental nonsense which poets and novelists write about tragedy, sorrow, aspiration, love and home has to be stopped."[15] And perhaps it is only natural for all of us, in examining our consciences, to look into Mr. MacLeish's record to see how safely our conduct as thinkers and citizens may be modelled on his and how far we may take his judgment as our guide to the high zeal and devotion to American standards which he today exemplifies to the nation.

We may begin with his attitude toward poetry itself. We have already seen his primary article of faith concerning it. For five years now he has been an exponent of "public speech" for poets,

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and not long ago he expressed unqualified contempt for all poetry that passes as "pure."

> The loudmouthed, disrespectful, horselaughing challenges to those who tell us poetry is "pure." Those who tell us poetry is "poetry." Those who tell us poetry is a parlor game and has no truck with the living of live men or the misery of hungry men or the politics of ambitious men or the indignation of believing men. Those who tell us the eternal poetry is the poetry written about the feeling of being dreadfully alone. Those with the High Standards. (The impotent have the High Standards: the begetters beget.) . . . Those who escape into mirrors—into the gentleman-farms and the upstairs rooms with the view of the river and the seminars at five p.m. The loudmouthed disrespectful challenge to all such to come out of their words and their paragraphs into the open air of the art and say their say in the sun with the wind blowing.[16]

He says that the poet may "bring the mind of this nation one step nearer to an understanding of its will, and one step nearer to an imagination of the world in which it can believe and which, believing, it can bring about,"[17] and he surmises that "the luxury of the complete confession, the uttermost despair, the farthest doubt should be denied themselves by writers living in any but the most orderly and settled times."[18] He announces that "the writer's irresponsibility is no less" that the scholar's when he so indulges himself:

> Where the modern scholar escapes from the adult judgments of the mind by taking the disinterested man of science as his model, the modern writer escapes by imitation of the artist. He practises his writing as a painter does his painting. He thinks as artist, which is to say he thinks without responsibility to anything but truth of feeling. . . . His devotion, as with every honest painter, is devotion to the thing observed, the actual thing, the thing without its consequences or its antecedents, naked of judgment, stripped of causes and effects. The invisible world, the intellectual world, the world of the relation of ideas, the world of judgments, of values, the world in which truth is good and lies are evil—this world has no existence for the honest artist or for the honest writer who takes the artist for his model. He sees the world as a god sees it—without morality, without care, without judgment. . . . His most searching purpose is to find, not the truth of human action, but the low-down, the discreditable explanation

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> which excuses him from care. The suggestion that there are things in the world—ideas, conceptions, ways of thinking—which the writer-artist should defend from attack—the suggestion above all that he was under an obligation to defend the inherited culture—would strike him as ridiculous.[19]

Mr. MacLeish does not stop to explain precisely where, among the great artists of the world, he finds so abject a detachment from values. Indeed he mentions values often without ever telling us exactly what he means by the word. Yet it was only in 1928 that he was venting his sarcasm on critics who were insisting that literature establish just those connections between aesthetic and practical values—between art and action, justice, and human salvation—for which he now cries. He argued then for "mere poetry, poetry made out of poetry, poetry without sex, smirks or graces, poetry without the sentimentality which passes among us for ironic, poetry without tags of wit." Such poetry, he said, leaves the function-claiming critic (Edmund Wilson was cited as the case in mind) "with his weight weightily on the wrong foot, exclaiming about Real Life (something, presumably, more real than poetry) and stabbing at that part of the volume where its life does not lie."[20] He went further:

> The intuitions of the poet are valid and may be accepted only because his loyalty is to his art, because his sole test of the acceptability of a word or a phrase or a poem is the test of his art and not the test of his politics or his social indignation. This is not to say that the true poet is without prejudice. He has of course the prejudices of his blood, his countryside, his education, if you will, his "class." But . . . there remain certain individuals who believe that the first and inescapable obligation of the poet is his obligation to his art; who believe that the fact that the practice of his art is difficult in no way releases him from that obligation; who believe that the desertion of his art for any reason, even the noblest, even the most humane, is nevertheless desertion.

He denounced the "couturier criticism" that legislates under the stress of current fads in journalism, social ideas, or propagandist values. He relegated all such special pleading to the corruptions of "the Literature Business" whose "exponents are irresponsible people, people with no literary standing and therefore people answerable only to the fashion publishers who employ them" and whose "inevitable effect is to deprive all writing of value and put it

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at the level of the things a smart woman ought to know. And that destruction of value poisons the art itself at its springs. It corrupts the artist's mind." "The quiet of mind, the cleanness of thought, the belief in his work, the pureness and piety without which no beautiful thing can be made"—these were what Mr. MacLeish then defended as the right of artists against the clamor of critics and agitators who were making the poet's immemorial privileges impossible for him: they are "troubled in him and destroyed."[21]

Mr. MacLeish had two bugbears ten years ago and they linger with him still. One was literary criticism, whether among "couturier critics" (whose "job is precisely to put on, one after the other, the newest literary modes and parade them for the instruction of an audience whose single artistic ambition is never to admire anything they ought not to admire; whose dogging fear is that they may sometime be taken in")[22] or among "Mr. Eliot's numerous critical imitators," the "sterile little pedants" who emit a "flood of didacticism and pomposity at which it is no longer possible even to laugh" and who are burdening "every serious review in the country" with "a load of sterile intellectualist finality under which poetry, were the poets in the habit of believing their book notices, must long since have perished."[23]

His other bane was "the social cant." In 1933 he spoke derisively of "the vogue of Marxian materialism and the loud and earnest attacks of the Marxists upon everything not mentioned in the text-books of Papa Marx" as having "put poetry in a defensive position which is no less dangerous because it is also ridiculous. The lady treed by a sow is not the less in peril because the sow is an object of derision." The social critic, he argued, "rests his whole case upon certain industrial hypotheses" relating to the changes wrought in the world "in a given direction by the mechanization of industry," but the "justification of his belief" has never been established for the "one good and sufficient reason . . . that no one, engineer, scientist, philosopher, or literary critic has as yet succeeded in discovering what exactly the thing called modern industrialism is."[24]

> Poetry is not a skill like glass-blowing which mechanization can destroy. It is an art. Or, if the word art is no longer admissible and the social vocabulary alone has present meaning, then

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> it is the most effective means of searching and translating and recording in permanent and recreative symbols the experience of the race. All the histories of the Church ever written are footnotes to Dante. And the essential life of this century will be read in poetry long after its sociologies have dissolved into the journalistic pother from which they spring. . . . And [our] grandchildren will find in *Anabase* with its biblical and Asian images, and in *The Waste Land*, with its Eastern references and its Elizabethan phrase, the understandable answer to questions neither Mr. Keynes nor Major Douglas nor the whole literature of Marxism will be able to resolve.[25]

Those were the days when Mr. MacLeish was arguing for poetic detachment from all such irrelevancies and distractions in terms both ardent and ironic. He turned out poems on the theme. Poets, he said, are persons of

> Known vocation following troops: they must sleep with
> Stragglers from either prince and of both views:
> The rules permit them to further the business of neither:
>
> It is also strictly forbidden to mix in maneuvers:
> Those that infringe are inflated with praise on the plazas—
> Their bones are resultantly afterwards found under newspapers:
> . . . . . .
> There is nothing worse for our trade than to be in style:
>
> He that goes naked goes farther at last than another:
> Wrap the bard in a flag or a school and they'll jimmy his
> Door down and be thick in his bed—for a month:
> . . . . . .
> Besides Tovarishch how to embrace an army?
> How to take to one's chamber a million souls?
> How to conceive in the name of a column of marchers?
>
> The things of the poet are done to a man alone
> As the things of love are done—or of death when he hears the
> Step withdraw on the stair and the clock tick only:
>
> Neither his class nor his kind nor his trade may come near him
> There where he lies on his left arm and will die:
> Nor his class nor his kind nor his trade when the blood is jeering
> . . . . . .
> Is it just to demand of us also to bear arms?[26]

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Yet five years after Mr. MacLeish wrote these grim words, he stood as Chairman of the 1937 National Congress of American Writers, an organization now frankly recognized as dominated by Stalinist influence to a degree that has, since the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, forced most of its officers, from Thomas Mann down, to resign in protest against Russian and Communist Party pressure. He called on the assembled writers (including poets) to recognize in "the rise of fascist powers and the success of fascist aggression" a matter of the most pressing concern. Far from celebrating the virtues of poetic detachment in such a crisis, or strictly forbidding his poetic members to mix in maneuvers, or telling them that there was nothing worse for their trade than to be in style, or questioning the justice of bearing arms, he roundly denounced "the hypocrites and the cynical and the frivolous who do not wish to understand what is happening in Spain." He flayed all liberal and skeptical minds who use arguments about personal integrity "to attack the intelligence, if not actually the integrity, of those who, not themselves Communists, stand as the Communists stand in active opposition to the fascist attack":

> They imply that those who find themselves in this position are being "used" and that they are dupes and stooges. . . . One would have thought that they [the liberals] would more naturally think of themselves as the users, as the leaders in this fight, as the responsible men. . . . To my mind there is something unpleasantly squeamish and virginal about this fear of being used, this phobia of being maneuvered—something almost indecently coy. The danger of rape has always existed in the world, but only the tenderest spirits let it keep them in at night.[27]

He rallied his listeners to make war against the fascist threat: "Those who fight against fascism are not fomenting war for the simple reason that the war is already fomented. The war is already made. Not a preliminary war. Not a local conflict. *The* war; the actual war. . . . Spain is no political allegory."[28] The Writers Congress gave Mr. MacLeish an opportunity for his first full-dress rehearsal in the role which he has been playing more recently in Washington. There he was already seizing upon the crisis of the hour as an excuse from enquiring into causes that brought fascism into the post-War world, or into the worth of those "statements of conviction, of purpose, and of belief on which the war of 1914-18

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was fought" and which were partly responsible for the conditions that fascism has since battened on. Mr. MacLeish is never in the mood for investigations. At the slightest mention of them, he retreats to a region of dim wonder, sanctimony, and surmise, and takes his language with him. Moreover, critical skepticism breeds "this distrust not only of the tags, not only of the slogans, but of the words themselves" and so leads to the conclusion "that not only the war and the war issues but *all* issues, all moral issues, were false—were fraudulent—were intended to deceive."[29]

Yet it is remarkable that when *The Modern Monthly* staged a questionnaire on the war issue in its June 1935 issue, Mr. MacLeish himself expressed a skepticism concerning all wars—even those wars against "evils worse than war"—that leaves little to be desired:

> The whole history of wars of liberation, of violent revolutions—even of the usual dishonest imperialistic war—proves that there are conditions, real or imagined, which men find unendurable and to which they prefer, or can be induced to prefer, the miseries of war. But the danger of an anti-war program built upon that admission, historically sound though it may be, is nevertheless obvious. For it is precisely these deepest human emotions to which the propaganda machinery always addresses itself in time of war . . . of *any* war. The last war against Germany was fought, you will recall, to make the world safe for democracy. The next war against Germany might very well be fought . . . to make the world safe against Nazism. With war in the offing the realistic and skeptical journal is not read: the newspapers echo the common cry: the propaganda machine whirls up the dust of its own choosing. If enough people believe that a certain type of war might be justifiable then the War Department will see that they get that kind of war—in print. *The kind of war they have gotten in fact they will discover for themselves some years afterwards.*[30]

Having directed this preliminary douche of ice-water against the war-hysteria which military crises breed, Mr. MacLeish gave his answers to the questionnaire. To its second and third questions (*Will your decision [about America's part in the next war] be altered if Soviet Russia is an ally of the United States in a war with Japan?* and *Would a prospective victory by Hitler over most of Europe move you to urge United States participation in opposi-*

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tion to Germany in order to prevent such a catastrophe?) he said "My answers would be No." And "I should answer your first question [*What will you do when America goes to war?*] as follows: I should do everything in my power to prevent the United States going to war under *any* circumstances. There is only one possible position against the menace of militarism: absolute hostility. Any other is romantic. Any other supplies the forces desiring war with the means of securing it."[31]

These answers were given in the summer of 1935 while Italy was preparing her invasion of Ethiopia, a few months after Hitler's rearmament of the Rhine, one year after his first conference with Mussolini at Venice, one year before the outbreak of those hostilities in Spain which in 1937 Mr. MacLeish accepted as "*our* war," and two years before he made his first attack on the "irresponsibles" by addressing the Phi Beta Kappa society at Columbia in the following words:

> O scholars schooled upon the books:
> O skillful readers of the page:
> Rise from your labor now! Enlist
> For warfare in this fighting age!
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I say the guns are in your house:
> I say there is no room for flight:
> Arise O scholars from your peace!
> Arise! Enlist! Take arms and fight![32]

In fact, two years before he answered the questionnaire Mr. MacLeish had harsh things to say of war-skepticism. Reviewing Laurence Stallings' *The First World War*, he saw that war as unjustly debunked of its "heroism, endurance, humor, death," its "great courage," its "fine sights." "The Second World War is the First World War as we now reconstruct it . . . seen through a keyhole, interpreted from a mountaintop, judged in its causes and its effects . . . a very impersonal and terrifying war" without heroes or humanity, a sorry matter of "beginnings, devices, forces—the greed of bankers, the treachery of politicians, the rapacity of munitions makers, the starvation of nations, the death of millions," and its "end is not victory or armistice . . . but a spiritual destruction, a world of dictatorships and tyranny, a dislocation of human life,

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a dénouement not yet achieved."[33] All this he found distorting and unjust to the heroic intentions of the fighters:

> Beliefs today are as fanatical, as intolerant, as they were in 1918. The vogue among intellectuals is Marxism in one form or another, with its anti-war convictions. And American intellectual Marxism is as like the Liberty Loan fanaticism of the war years as one opposite can be like another. . . . Nothing which does not conform to the official dogmas will be endured and any man who questions them, and certainly any man who makes fun of them, will be strung up to the nearest lamp post of Marxian invective. The fact that the lamp posts are incapable of bearing the weight of a grown man is irrelevant: the will is there, and the spit balls, and the squealing rage.[33]

He admitted that Mr. Stallings' photographs formed "one of the most compelling anti-war tracts ever produced;" he found that the book renewed "all the sensations of loathing and hatred for which its editor proposes," yet he nostalgically regretted that "the feel and taste of the time itself" eluded the record—that feel and taste which he has recently found so palatable in *The Ramparts We Watch.* He sighed "that it is today not only immoral but unfashionable as well to doubt that all the dead were victims—to suggest that some few ridiculously believed in the thing for which (or so they thought) they died."[34] Only a few years earlier Mr. MacLeish's poem "Memorial Rain" implied that the dead had indeed been hoaxed by official platitudes and mob-duping oratory,[35] but now, in 1933, in "Lines for an Interment" he translated that tragedy into an antidote of withering irony:

> It's a long time to lie in the earth with your honor:
> The world Soldier the world has been moving on. . . .
>
> We are all acting again like civilized beings:
> People mention it at tea. . . .
>
> The Facts of Life we have learned are Economic:
> You were deceived by the detonation of bombs:
>
> You thought of courage and death when you thought of warfare:
> Hadn't they taught you the fine words were unfortunate. . . .
>
> You can rest now in the rain in the Belgian meadow—
> Now that it's all explained away and forgotten. . . .[36]

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The courage and death of duped heroism seem now to have become a justification for the dupers themselves and a reproof to the "civilized beings" who profess to know how drastically both the dead and the living were hamstrung.

Yet 1935 found him denouncing the "propaganda machinery" which riles up the "deepest human emotions . . . in time of war . . . of *any* war," defending the "realistic and skeptical journal," declaring "absolute hostility" against the "menace of militarism," and promising himself that he would "do everything in my power to prevent the United States going to war under *any* circumstances."[37] Perhaps Mr. MacLeish's trapeze has never served its uses more brilliantly than during his astonishing gyrations on this single theme.

It would be equally entertaining to trace his acrobatics on other questions, but space forbids. His veerings on matters of personality and literary taste are instructive. In 1928, during one of his rants against criticism, he singled out Edmund Wilson as a notable example of critical ineptitude, whose distinction only served to make "national calamities" of his "misfortunes,"[38] but in 1934, in denouncing the leaders of the revolutionary movement in America—those "writers and journalists who shape its thought [and] are for the most part intellectual terrorists, seizing whatever concept will most effectively destroy" and who advocate a cause "conceived, delivered, and nurtured in negatives; its impulse is hatred"—he graciously excepted Mr. Wilson from this category as standing among those "who are preserved from hatred by the pure integrity of their minds."[39] Mr. Dos Passos was also exempted because he was "moved by a generous passion for justice profound as the instinct of an animal"[40]—though in 1940 he is listed among "the honest men . . . writers of great skill, integrity, and devotion," who have nevertheless written "words which have borne bitter and dangerous fruit" and which "have done more to disarm democracy in the face of fascism than any other single influence."[41]

Mr. MacLeish's allegiances among poets have been similarly wobbly. In 1932 he was still defending Eliot:

> The truth is that all that is living and substantial, rather than doctrinaire and dead, in the current cant of social criticism, has long since found an expression in poetry. Mr. Eliot said more

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about the modern chaos which so disturbs his social critics in fifty or sixty lines than they will ever say in all their volumes. And said it ten years before. And the increasing plurality and anonymity of modern life which gives contemporary social criticism its only living justification has a clearer expression in modern verse than it has yet had in modern critical prose.[42]

Whereas in 1938 he said that

> Modern poetry signifies, if it signifies anything, the effort to regain for poetry the public speech of which it has been so long deprived. It is a revolt against the almost neurotic conception of poetry which exiled poets from the actual world. . . . The intellectual construction of *The Waste Land*, and the theories underlying that construction, have nothing to do with modern poetry, though they have a great deal to do with that very eminent modern poet Mr. T. S. Eliot. Indeed, they are in essence nothing but a kind of broken-hearted and ironic inversion of the almost universal practice of those earlier centuries in England and France when new poems (and a new age) were built quite candidly and believingly out of the broken stones of classical antiquity. The only functional difference between Eliot's classical allusions and Milton's is that Milton's stones were chosen to embellish the edifice he was building while Eliot's were chosen to betray the tragic shoddiness of his time.[43]

And in 1939 he said that the poetry of Verlaine, Laforgue, Eliot, and Pound really belonged to the last decades of the Nineteenth Century and the first two decades of this: "a poetry formed not by the human and political necessities of our own world but by the literary necessities of the world before the war":

> The poetry we call contemporary was originally, and still remains, a poetry of literary revolt. . . . It was, in its own time, a needed and cleansing poetry of literary revolt. It was never a poetry capable of the new labor of construction which must now be done. . . . It is this characteristic of contemporary poetry which explains its failure to make recognizable to us our experience of our time. To write in faith and credit of such experience as ours, and to bring it to recognition, requires the responsible and dangerous language of acceptance and belief. The responsible language of acceptance and belief is not possible to the poetry of literary revolt.[44]

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The verse of Mr. MacLeish's own public-speech phase has been his demonstration of what the responsible language of acceptance and belief should be. A glance at what he has arrived at in this "dangerous" medium, and what faith and credit he has managed to extract from such experience as ours, may be opportune.

(To Be Continued)

NOTES

1) Published by Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1939 and 1940; 75c and $1 respectively.
2) Two of the first were *The American Experience* (printed with *The Hispanic Foundation in The Library of Congress* by Robert C. Smith). U. S. Government Printing Office, 1939; and *Libraries in the Contemporary Crisis*, an Address by Archibald MacLeish at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pa. Founders' Day, October 19, 1939. U. S. Government Printing Office, 1939.
3) Quotations from *The Irresponsibles* are from *The Nation*, May 18, 1940, pp. 618-23, where the essay first appeared; here page 623.
4) *Ibid.*, p. 619. Compare what is said on the freedom of the artist in "To the Young Men of Wall Street," *Saturday Review of Literature*, January 16, 1932, pp. 453-4.
5) "Post-War Writers and Pre-War Readers," a speech before the American Association for Adult Education" as printed in *The New Republic*, June 10, 1940, pp. 789-90.
6) *Cf.* "Men of My Century Loved Mozart" in *Poems, 1924-1933* (1933), pp. 89-90, and the argument in "Poetry and the Public World," *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1939, pp. 823-30.
7) Matthew Josephson, "Jurist—III," *The New Yorker*, December 14, 1940, p. 34.
8) "Putnam Praises MacLeish," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, November 1939, p. 221.
9) "In Challenge Not Defense," *Poetry*, July 1938, pp. 212-19, *passim*.
10) "Libraries in the Contemporary Crisis," *The Library Journal*, November 15, 1939, pp. 879-82. *passim*. *Cf.* also "Of the Librarian's Profession," *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1940, pp. 786-90, and "The Obligation of Libraries in a Democracy," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, April 1940, pp. 560-1.
11) "Foreword," *Poems, 1924-1933*. The "remark" by the present writer, *Poetry*, June 1934, p. 150.
12) *The New Republic*, June 10, 1940, p. 790.
13) *Ibid.*, p. 790.
14) "Archibald MacLeish and 'the Word'," *The New Republic*, July 1, 1940, pp. 30-2.
15) "The Tough-Muscle Boys of Literature," *The American Mercury*, November 1940, pp. 369-74.
16) "In Challenge Not Defense," *Poetry*, July 1938, p. 212.
17) *Ibid.*, 219.
18) *The New Republic*, June 10, 1940, p. 790.
19) *The Nation*, May 18, 1940, p. 622.
20) "Behold the Critiquins,' *The Saturday Review of Literature*, January 21, 1928, pp. 529-31.
21) *Ibid.*, 531.
22) *Ibid.*, 530.
23) "Stephen Spender and the Critics," *The Hound and Horn*, October-December 1933, pp. 145-7. Mr. MacLeish's opinions of critics are scattered; besides these two articles may be noted the "Foreword" to *Poems, 1924-1933* and the introduction to the *Poems* of James Agee. For an example of Mr. MacLeish's tactics in dealing with people who argue with him, see his reply to Harold Rosenberg's "The God in the Car" (an analysis of "In Challenge Not Defense," *Poetry*, September 1938, pp. 334-42) in his letter printed *Ibid.*, pp. 342-3.
24) "The Social Cant," *The New Republic*, December 21, 1932, pp. 156-8; here 156.
25) *Ibid.*, 156. *Cf.* "The Poetry of Karl Marx," *Saturday Review of Literature*, February 17, 1934, pp. 485-6.
26) "Invocation to the Social Muse," *The New Republic*, October 26, 1932, p. 296.
27) "The War is Ours," *New Masses*, June 22, 1937, pp. 5-6.
28) *Ibid. Cf.* also another version of this contribution to the Congress in "Spain and American Writers," *The Writer in a Changing World*, edited by Henry Hart for the League of American Authors (New York, 1937), pp. 56-62.
29) *The New Republic*, June 10, 1940, p. 790.
30) "When America Goes to War," *Modern Monthly*, June 1935, pp. 199-204; here 201. Italics mine.
31) *Loc. cit.*
32) "Speech to the Scholars," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, June 12, 1937, p. 12.
33) *The New Republic*, September 20, 1933, p. 159. The following quotation: *Ibid.*, 160.
34) *Ibid.*, 160.
35) Reprinted from *Streets of the Moon* (1926) in *Poems, 1924-1933*, pp. 134-6.
36) "Lines for an Interment," *The New Republic*, September 20, 1933, p. 159.
37) *The Modern Monthly*, June 1935, p. 201.
38) *The Saturday Review of Literature*, January 21, 1928, p. 530.
39) "Preface to an American Manifesto," *The Forum*, April 1934, p. 195.
40) *Loc. cit.*
41) *The New Republic*, June 10, 1940, p. 790.
42) "The Social Cant," *The New Republic*, December 21, 1932, p. 156. For an earlier version of Mr. MacLeish's attitude toward modern writers see "The New Age and the New Writers," *Yale Review*, January 1923, pp. 314-21.
43) "Public Speech and Private Speech in Poetry," *Yale Review*, March 1938, pp. 536-47; here, p. 538-9.
44) "Poetry and the Public World," *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1939, pp. 823-30; here p. 828-30.

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Farewell Chorus

DAVID GASCOYNE

1.

And so! the long black pullman is at last departing, now,
After those undermining years of angry waiting and cold tea;
And all your small grey faces and wet hankies slide away
Backwards into the station's cave of cloud. And so Good-bye
To our home-town, so foreign now its lights no longer show;
And to old lives already indistinct as a dull play
We saw while staying somewhere in the Midlands long ago.

Farewell both to the few and to the many; for to-night
Our souls may be required of us; and so we say Adieu
To those who charmed us with their ever ready wit
But could not see the point; to those whose polished hands
And voices could allay a little while our private pain
But could not stay to soothe us when worse bouts began;
To those whose beauties were too brief: Farewell, dear friends.

To you as well whom we could never love, hard though
We tried, because our pity told us you were weak,
And whom because of pity we abhorred; to you
Whose gauche distress and badly-written postcards made us ache
With angrily impatient self-reproach; you who were too
Indelicately tender, whose too soft eyes made us look
(Against our uncourageous wish) swiftly away. . . .

To those, too, whom we hardly knew, or could not know;
To the indifferent and the admired; to the once-met
And long-remembered faces: Yes, Good-bye to you
Who made us turn our heads to look again, and wait
For hours in vain at the same place next day;

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Who for a moment might have been the lost selves sought
Without avail, and whom we never shall find now.

Away, away! Yet now it is no longer in retreat
That we are leaving. All our will is drowned
As by an inner tidal-wave that has washed our regret
And small fears and exhausted implications out of mind.
You can't accompany our journey. Nor may we return
Except in unimpassioned recollection from beyond
That ever-nearer frontier that our fate has drawn.

2.

And so let's take a last look-round, and say Farewell to all
Events that gave the last decade, which this New Year
Brings to its close, a special pathos. Let us fill
One final fiery glass and quickly drink to "the Pre-War"
Before we greet the "Forties," whose unseen sphinx-face
Is staring fixedly upon us from behind its veil;
Drink farewell quickly, ere the Future smash the glass.

Even while underneath the floor are whirling on
The wheels which carry us towards some Time-to-Come,
Let us perform this hasty mental rite (as one
Might cast a few imagined bays into the tomb
Of an unloved but memorable great man);
Soon the still-near will seem remotely far; there's hardly time
For much oration more than mere Good-bye, again:

To the delusive peace of those disintegrating years
Through which burst uncontrollably into our view
Successive and increasingly premonitory flares,
Explosions of the dangerous truth beneath, which no
Steel-plated self-deception could for long withstand. . . .
Years through the rising storm of which somehow we grew,
Struggling to keep an anchored heart and open mind,

Too often failing. Years through which none the less
The coaxing of complacency and sleep could still persuade

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Kind-hearted Christians of the permanence of Peace,
Increase of common-sense and civic virtue. Years which bade
Less placid conscientious souls indignantly arise
Upon ten thousand platforms to proclaim the system mad
And urge the liquidation of a senile ruling-class.

Years like a prison-wall, frustrating though unsound,
On which the brush of History, with quick, neurotic strokes,
Its latest and most awe-inspiring fresco soon outlined:
Spenglerian lowering of the Western skies, red lakes
Of civil bloodshed, free flags flagrantly torn down
By order of macabre puppet orators, the blind
Leading blindfolded followers into the Devil's den. . . .

3.

And so, Good-bye, grim 'Thirties. These your closing days
Have shown a new light, motionless and far
And clear as ice, to our sore riddled eyes;
And we see certain truths now, which the fear
Aroused by earlier circumstances could but compromise,
Concerning all men's lives. Beyond despair
May we take wiser leave of you, knowing disasters cause.

Having left all false hopes behind, may we move on
At a vertiginous unmeasured speed, beyond, beyond,
Across this unknown Present's bleak and rocky plain;
Through sudden tunnels; in our ears the wind
Echoing unintelligible guns. Mirrored within
Each lonely consciousness, War's world seems without end.
Dumbly we stare up at strange skies with each day's dawn.

Could you but hear our final farewell call, how strained
And hollow it would sound! We are already far
Away, forever leaving further leagues behind
Of this most perilous and incoherent land
We're in. The unseen enemy are near.
Above the cowering capital Death's wings impend.
Rapidly under ink-black seas to-day's doomed disappear.

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We are alone with one another, but our eyes
Meet seldom in the dark. What a relentless roar
Stuffs every ear, as though with wool! The winds that rise
Out of our dereliction's vortex, hour by hour,
To bring us word of the incessant wordless guns,
Tirades of the insane, thick hum of 'planes, the rage of fire,
Eruptions, waves: all end in utmost silence in our brains.

"The silence after the viaticum." So silent is the ray
Of naked radiance that lights our actual scene,
Leading the gaze into the nameless and unknown
Extremes of this existence where fear's armour falls away
And lamentation and defeat and pain
Are all transfigured by acceptance; where men see
The tragic splendour of their final destiny.

New Year 1940.

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Reading from Left to Right

Dwight Macdonald

FWTBT Hemingway's publishers advertise his new book as "the novel that has something for everybody." This seems to be an accurate statement. It is the biggest publishing success since *Gone With the Wind:* almost half a million copies have been sold and it is selling at the rate of 50,000 a week; Paramount has bought the movie rights at the highest price yet paid by Hollywood for a novel, and Gary Cooper, at Hemingway's insistence, is to play the hero; the initials FWTBT promise to become as familiar journalistic shorthand as GWTW. At the same time, the book has been extravagantly praised by the critics, from Mr. Mumford Jones of the *Saturday Review of Literature* (who describes Pilar as a "Falstaffian" character and thinks it is "at least possible that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* may become the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the Spanish Civil War") to Mr. Edmund Wilson of the *New Republic.* It is seldom that a novelist gathers both riches and reputation from the same book.

In the face of all this enthusiasm, I have to note that my own experience with *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was disappointing.* The opening chapters promised a good deal: they were moving, exciting, wonderfully keen in sensory description. They set the stage for major tragedy. But the stage was never really filled, the promise wasn't kept. The longer I read, the more of a let-down I felt, the more I had a sense that the author was floundering around, uncertain of his values and intentions, unable to come up to the pretensions of his theme. One trouble with the book is that it isn't a novel at all but rather a series of short stories, some of them excellent—Pilar's narratives of the killing of the fascists and of her life with the consumptive bullfighter; the description of Gaylords Hotel; Andres' journey through the Loyalist lines; and the final blowing up of the bridge—imbedded in a mixture of sentimental love scenes, too much talk, rambling narrative sequences, and rather dull interior monologues by Jordan. So, too, with the characters; they are excellent when they are sketched in just enough for the purposes of a short story, as with El Sordo, the dignified Fernando, and the old man Anselmo. But when Hemingway tries to do more, he fails, as with the character of Pilar, which starts off well enough but becomes gaseous when it is expanded.

*Elsewhere in this issue, Lionel Trilling reviews *For Whom the Bell Tolls* at length. Here I am concerned primarily with its political rather than its literary significance—as I shall try to show, its shortcomings in both respects are organically connected.

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The worst failure is the central character, Robert Jordan. Like previous Hemingway heroes, Jordan is not an objectively rendered character but simply a mouthpiece for the author. The earlier heroes had at least a certain dramatic consistency, but Jordan is a monster, uniting—or trying to—the nihilism and cynicism of the usual Hemingway hero with a rather simpleminded political idealism—a sort of Hemingwayesque scoutmaster leading his little troop of peasants. For the Hemingway who speaks through Jordan is a Hemingway with a hangover, a repentant Hemingway who has been in contact with a revolution and has accepted it enough to be ashamed of his old faith and yet who cannot feel or understand deeply the new values. The result is that Jordan as a character is vague and fuzzy, destroyed by the continual friction of these irreconcilable viewpoints.

"TURN OFF THE THINKING NOW . . ."

Jordan's confusion is shared and not understood by his creator, and this confusion is the root of the failure of the novel. Although Hemingway himself denies it frequently in the course of the book, and although most of the critics take his denial at face value, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a political novel, both in that it deals with a great political event, the Spanish civil war, and that its author takes a definite (though largely unconscious) political attitude towards this event. And it is a failure because Hemingway lacks the moral and intellectual equipment to handle such a theme. Instinctively, he tries to cut the subject down to something he can handle by restricting his view of the war to the activities of a small band of peasant guerrillas behind Franco's lines (and hence safely insulated from Loyalist politics) and by making his protagonist—in Karkov's words—"a young American of slight political development but . . . a fine partisan record."

But such limitations negate the pretensions of the book. Hemingway's peasants have been so depoliticalized that it seems little more than chance that they are Loyalists rather than Rebels, and so the long novel is reduced to the scale of an adventure story. As for Jordan, on page 17 he admonishes himself: "Turn off the thinking now, old timer, old comrade. You're a bridge-blower now. Not a thinker." But what can be more fruitless than to follow through some five hundred pages the thoughts of a hero who has renounced thought?

I think the novel is a failure for precisely the reason that many critics seem to like it most: because of its rejection of political consciousness. "The *kind* of people people are rather than their social-economic relations is what Hemingway is particularly aware of," writes Edmund Wilson in the *New Republic*, and it is clear from the rest of his review that he conceives of "social-economic relations" as somehow conflicting with "the kind of people people are." This false antithesis, between politics and 'art,' or even between politics and 'life,' attractive enough always to the empirically-slanted American consciousness, is doubly seductive today when

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political creeds have been so discredited by the events of recent years. Mr. Wilson ends his review: "That he should thus go back to his art, after a period of artistic demoralization, and give it a large scope, that in an era of general perplexity and panic, he should dramatize the events of the immediate past in terms, not of partisan journalism, but of the common human instincts that make men both fraternal and combative—is reassuring evidence of the soundness of our intellectual life."

Of course, posing the alternative in these terms, one must agree that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is vastly preferable to the "partisan journalism" of *The Fifth Column.* But there is another alternative, namely the treatment of revolutionary struggle as Malraux and Silone have treated it in their novels, on the level of political consciousness. Mr. Wilson describes Hemingway's political understanding as "not so highly developed as it is with a writer like Malraux," adding "but it is here combined with other things that these political novelists often lack." Just what are these "other things"? I find at least as profound an understanding of "the kind of people people are" in Silone and Malraux as in Hemingway. Far from there being an antithesis between these two kinds of understanding, the human and the political, in these European novelists the one illuminates the other and is integrated with it. Politics is simply one category of human behavior—to the novelist who is writing about a revolution, the most important one.

To Mr. Wilson, however, "politics" seems to mean the threadbare, vulgarized formulae, the treacheries and lies of Stalinism. Thus he actually describes the Hemingway of *The Fifth Column* as infused with "the semi-religious exaltation of communism," whereas in fact Hemingway in that period expressed the most tepid sort of Popular Frontism. And Mr. Wilson can write of the new novel: "Thus we get down out of the empyrean of Marxist political analysis, where the leaders are pulling the strings for the masses and see the ordinary people as they come." It has never occurred to me that the defects of *The Fifth Column* could be attributed to a too close study of the Marxist classics. And as for the leaders pulling the strings for the masses—Mr. Wilson should read again the passages in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* dealing with the necessity for "discipline," and with the "crazies," the Anarchists.

THE POLITICS OF ANTI-POLITICS

This misconception of the nature of politics leads Mr. Wilson—and many others—to conclude that since Hemingway in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* explicitly rejects the political catchwords of Stalinism, he has therefore liberated himself from 'politics' in general and from Stalinism in particular. Hemingway himself, whose conception of politics is essentially that of Mr. Wilson, may well suffer from the same delusion. But those who see no further into a political program than its catchwords are likely to imagine, when they lose faith in the catchwords, that to reject them is also

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to free themselves from the program. It may be, however, that they merely become *unconscious* of their political values.

Thus it is precisely that lack of political consciousness which Mr. Wilson finds so admirable that prevents Hemingway from really breaking with Stalinism. Jordan 'turns off the thinking' only to act the more freely in accordance with the very political formulae he has come to distrust so deeply as not to want to think about.

"Here in Spain the Communists offered the best discipline and the soundest and sanest for the prosecution of the war. He accepted their discipline because, in the conduct of the war, they were the only party whose program and discipline he could respect. What were his politics, then? He had none now, he told himself. But do not tell any one else, he thought. . . ." Hemingway tries to write a non-political political novel and Jordan tries to participate in a revolutionary war and yet reject politics. But these are merely *other forms* of political thought and action.

"He would not think himself into any defeatism. The first thing was to win the war. If we did not win the war, everything was lost." Here we see a false antithesis, between thinking and successful action (thought leads to defeatism) similar to that already noted between politics and human reality. This corresponds in turn to the false antithesis made by the Stalinists in Spain between the task of winning the war (a 'practical' matter which must be settled first) and that of creating a new society (a 'theoretical' matter, to be left to the distant future, a sort of dessert to be enjoyed after the war). But there was no real antithesis between the two tasks: the war could have been won only by carrying through the social revolution.

I will be told that Hemingway directly attacks the Stalinists in his portrait of Marty and in his rendering of the cynical atmosphere of Gaylords. It is true that these represent a shift away from Stalinism—but of a superficial nature, like his rejection of the Party catchwords. Hemingway is at pains to indicate that Jordan's first reaction to Gaylords was naive, that war is an ugly business, and that cynicism may be permitted those who are really facing the realities and 'doing the job.' And Marty is presented as literally half-crazy, his lunacy consisting in a passion for shooting Trotskyists and Anarchists—thus attributing the settled and rational (from its viewpoint) policy of the C.P. in Spain as the vagary of an eccentric individual!

It is notable that in his attempts to define to himself why he finds it increasingly harder to believe in the Loyalist cause, Jordan often blames the Spanish national character (which he feels is treacherous, provincial, cruel, etc.) and sometimes even certain disturbing moral characteristics of individual Stalinists. But he never gives a thought to the really disillusioning development: the slow strangling, by the Stalino-bourgeois coalition, of the revolutionary upsurge of the Spanish masses. The most politically revealing thing in the book is Hemingway's vindictive picture of the Anarchists—"the crackpots and romantic revolutionists," "the wild

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men," or, most often, simply "the crazies." One character thinks of them as "dangerous children; dirty, foul, undisciplined, kind, loving, silly and ignorant but armed." (This character is not Karkov or Jordan but the simple peasant lad, Andres, who might have disliked the Anarchists but would certainly not have disliked them in these drillmaster's terms—a curious example of how Hemingway sometimes violates realism to voice his own prejudices.) What worries Hemingway about the Anarchists is that they were undisciplined and armed, which is a good short description of the masses in process of making a revolution. His counter-prescription is expressed in Jordan's evaluation of the Stalinist generals:

"They were Communists and they were disciplinarians. The discipline that they would enforce would make good troops. Lister was murderous in discipline. . . . But he knew how to forge a division into a fighting unit."

I find it significant that the Communist Party seems to be undecided as to just what line to take towards *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. While the book has been roundly denounced in classic C.P. style in the *Daily Worker*, it is being sold in the Party bookshops. And Alvah C. Bessie in the *New Masses* writes more in sorrow than in anger, taking the line that Hemingway, while still sincerely enlisted in the fight against "our common enemy" (reaction), has been misled so that "at the moment he is found in bad company." The Party has evidently not given up hope of welcoming back the straying sheep into the fold at some future (and happier) date. I should say this is a shrewd political judgment.

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"A TRIM RECKONING!"

"Greeks! We shall now prove whether we are worthy of our ancestors and of the liberty which our forefathers secured for us. . . . The time has come for all Greeks to fight to the death for all they hold dear." Such was the Periclean appeal made by Premier Metaxas on the day the Italians began to invade Greece. The spectacle of the quasi-fascist dictator, Metaxas, calling on the Greek masses to fight to the death for the liberties he himself extinguished five years ago, this is the latest and not the last irony in the world struggle between fascism and "democracy." As the war spreads like a fungus over the globe—the last "world war" was a provincial backyard affair compared to this one—from Danzig to Vyborg to Trondheim to Louvain to Dunkirk to Dakar to Dong Dang to Sidi Barrani to Bahrein to Thailand to Athens, the question becomes ever more urgent and ever more obscure: what is a "democracy"?

A rough empirical definition seems to be: any country that comes into opposition to the Axis powers. The American press stands ready to confer a brevet rank in the army of Democracy on any leader—from Baron Mannerheim to the Royalist general, De Gaulle—or any nation—

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from feudal Poland to semifascist Greece—which, for whatever reasons or however reluctantly, finds itself on the side of the angels. The Latin American dictatorships have lately been found to be "democracies," and the *New York Times* has a form editorial standing ready in type, lamenting in pathetic tones the extinction of one more heroic little "democracy," which is printed whenever the Axis invades a new nation. On Greece, the *Times* found it strategic to say more about Pericles than about Metaxas. And doubtless when and if the Reichswehr moves into the Ukraine, the *Times* will see the violation of the Soviet border as one more breach in the citadel of Democracy.

The point is, of course, that just as fascism takes power internally only after bourgeois democracy has strangled in its own economic and social contradictions, so on the international scene the Axis armies overthrow governments already compromised and enfeebled, democratic in form only—or not even in form. The war is constantly exposing the meaninglessness of the concept, "democracy," in the modern capitalist world. So is it, also, with the other terms in the lexicon of bourgeois idealism, which are steadily losing their luster under the corrosive action of events. Think of the millions of noble words which were reduced to so much baled newsprint by the French debacle! "*Be faithful and united. Your sacrifice will not be in vain.*" (Weygand to his troops, on assuming command during the Battle of France) "*France enters this war with a pure conscience, which for her is not a word. The world will perhaps soon know that moral forces are also forces.*" (Reynaud, on Italy's declaration of war) "*We shall defend every stone, every clod of earth, every lamp-post and every building. We would rather have Paris razed than fall into German hands.*" (The French "official spokesman," the day before the Germans entered Paris) "*Tell America that in our fight to save the world from a return to the dark ages, we shall not falter. . . . The morale of the defenders and the people of France has never been higher than at this critical moment. Galvanized by the unprovoked invasion of their soil, steadied by the calm courage of General Weygand, they are determined to win at whatever cost.*" (Reynaud, June 10).

The difference between such words and the reality that came to pass must either rouse a people to revolutionary passion or stun it into apathy and cynicism. The latter seems to have resulted in France, whence the survival of the Vichy "government"—a frail shell empty of all social content, which the first stirrings of the French masses will shatter. The quintessence of Vichy is the official report on the recent meeting between Petain and Hitler: "The Marshal was received with the honors due his rank." One recalls Petain's comment on the armistice: "The terms are severe, but our honor is safe." We may be sure that the French people are thinking less in Petain's than in Falstaff's terms about this concept:

"Honor pricks me on. Yea, but how if honor pricks me off when I come on? How then? Can honor set a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honor hath no skill in surgery then?

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No. What is honor? A word. What is that word honor? Air. A trim reckoning!"

THE CRISIS OF THE WORD

The almost daily reminders that the fine words of bourgeois ideology, whether in the mouth of a Roosevelt or a Petain, are so much air have naturally had an effect on popular consciousness. The process began long before the war; it has been going on, in fact, since the Great French Revolution, and with unparalleled intensity abroad since 1914 and in this country since 1929. By now, bourgeois democracy has broken down so completely as a social and economic system that increasingly large sections of the population have lost all faith in it. They just don't believe the words any more.

From the viewpoint of the bourgeoisie, this is a very serious matter. "The characteristic of the attitude of the younger generation which most disturbs their elders," said Archibald MacLeish in his famous Association for Adult Education speech last summer, "is their distrust not only of all slogans and tags, but even of all words, their distrust, that is to say, of all statements of principle and conviction, all declarations of moral purpose." MacLeish, who as the Librarian of Congress and the confidante of President Roosevelt is himself not the least securely entrenched of these 'elders,' is quite properly concerned over the impotence today in America of what he calls "The Word." This mystic entity, which he capitalizes throughout, MacLeish seems to conceive of, much as Hitler does, as a sort of medicine man's charm which can *of itself*, regardless of its relationship to reality, sway men to action. To reject The Word as the young men of America are now doing, is "to stand disarmed and helpless before an aggressor whose strength consists precisely in destroying respect for the law, respect for morality and respect for The Word."

Now, of course, Hitler, far from destroying respect for The Word, has exploited it more successfully than any demagogue in history. What MacLeish is really complaining about is that Hitler's Word has shown itself so much more potent than *his* Word as to destroy "respect" for the latter. Hitler has won the youth of Germany, as is well known, by persuading them that fascism offers them what they want from life, that it is worth fighting and dying for. (If respect for The Word is the mark of a healthy society, as MacLeish implies, then Nazi Germany is the high point of civilization.) This is a lie, but it is believed. MacLeish's complaint seems to be that *his*—and Roosevelt's—lies are *not* believed.

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THESE MAD GERMANS

One way of looking at fascism is as the *systematization* of the brutalities, contradictions and lunacies of monopoly capitalism. (That in the process of systematizing them,

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the fascists destroy the capitalist system itself—this is another story.) Several years ago, for example, a Nazi economist proposed *planned* depressions: "If there must be crises, then let us have planned and limited crises." He suggested that the disorderly old-fashioned "business cycle" be replaced by "a planned upswing epoch of say thirty years," to be followed by a "sacrificial year" of collapse and ruin. This *annus terribilis* "should be announced at least ten years in advance, to give every one time to prepare for it." His proposal was stillborn, since obviously if the State has enough control over economic forces to *plan* depressions, it can also *prevent* them, which is what seems to have happened in Germany since 1933.

It is significant, however, that such a proposal should have been seriously made. The Nazis are true Germans in this remorseless application of system to the irrational as well as to the rational. Before Hitler and Goebbels went to work, who would have thought that anti-Semitism, crudest and most primitive of cultural hangovers from the middle ages, could become the State doctrine of the most advanced industrial nation of Europe? There is a touch of the paranoiac, with his systematized delusions, in this, and it is not surprising that the unsystematic Anglo-Saxon nations have long regarded the Germans as not wholly sane. When the liberal weeklies depict Hitler as a madman, they are carrying on a long tradition. Disraeli denounced "the fifty mad professors at Frankfurt," Palmerston called Bismarck "the crazy minister at Berlin," and Lord Salisbury was sure that Wilhelm II "must be a little off his head." Actually, the lunacy lies deep in the economic and social system of modern monopoly capitalism, and the Germans are guilty merely of doing consciously and systematically what other imperialist nations do under cover of a smokescreen of hypocrisy. But, of course, every one is shocked when the fig leaf is dropped.

Thus it is with the greatest of all the lunacies of modern capitalism: the fact that its only perspective is mass slaughter and devastation. As every one knows, the Nazis began building their war economy ("wehrwirtschaft") long before the fall of 1939; for the last four years, the one aim of their entire system has been preparation for war. Today, too late, the democracies are coming to understand that efficient warmaking is the only important activity of modern capitalism. The Germans understood this years ago, and proceeded to organize on a vast scale and with the utmost scientific efficiency the apparatus for destruction.

THE RATIONALIZATION OF DESTRUCTION

In their military tactics, also, the Germans, with that method and thoroughness and lack of all taste and proportion which is the maddening thing about them, have simply dared to carry out the logic

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of imperialist warfare.* The object of warfare, they reasoned in their earnest Teutonic way, is to demoralize and destroy the enemy. Therefore, in addition to the usual technology, the Nazi general staff devised such refinements as air bombs with terrifying sirens attached to them, the use of refugees as an instrument of war (forcing or decoying them onto the roads so as to block enemy troop movements, and often, to insure traffic jams, later machinegunning them from the air), parachute troops who landed dressed as peasants, motorists, enemy officers, even priests and nuns, and the whole fantastic "fifth column" technique of spreading confusion and despair behind the enemy lines.

Such methods were used in the most deliberate, purposeful way. These were no hordes of Mongols, lusting for destruction, but rather the highly trained employees of the firm of A. Hitler & Co., specialists in war. It is significant that there are no atrocity stories in this war, no tales of rape and looting. On the contrary, all reports stress the extraordinarily "correct" behavior of the German soldiery. When the Nazi troops entered Paris, they strolled about the city gaping at the sights, guide book in hand, like so many quiet, sober workmen on a cultural holiday. The "Strength through Joy" organization was ready with maps of Paris and sightseeing tours. Descriptions of the organization and methods of the Reichswehr read like the articles *Fortune* prints on manufacturing technique. Destruction has been rationalized, and the business is gone about with the orderly precision of any large-scale industrial process.

This is especially notable in the air force, where destruction is turned on and off like a water tap. Nazi bombers developed such skill that they were able to destroy every building around the cathedral of Rouen without seriously damaging that historic structure—a feat which there are photographs to prove. It was a commonplace of their bombing technique in the Low Countries to bomb not roads and streets, thus impeding the advance of their own troops later on, but rather objects alongside the roads, so that whole towns would be levelled to dust without a single bomb crater in the streets.

But the showpiece of the *luftwaffe* was the destruction, between the hours of 12 and 2:30 on the afternoon of May 14, of the central district of Rotterdam. The *luftwaffe* demonstrated its virtuosity by localizing all the destruction in a sharply defined area of two and a half square miles. In presenting pictures of the results, *Life* (September 9) states: "By 2:30 some 26,000 buildings were in ruins. The sewer pipes, the water mains, the canal machinery had been smashed. The falling wreckage had trapped

*Lest I be accused of overemphasizing racial traits, I hasten to add that the Nazi military triumph is due also to the fact that the Germans had to face the unworkability of democratic capitalism much sooner than did other nations. The Allied democracies won the last war and had vast resources and colonial empires to draw upon, but the Germans had to grapple with problems of class struggle, of huge productive capacity and inadequate markets, of extreme economic instability. Adversity is a great disciplinarian—and teacher. Nations, like individuals, do more thinking in hard times than in prosperity.

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great masses of citizens in their bomb shelters. Either they were drowned by the water or they were roasted alive by the fires set by incendiary bombs. The Germans estimated that only 300 Rotterdammers had been killed. The Dutch knew that more than 25,000 were killed. For seven days they kept finding an average of 1800 bodies a day, after the streets had been cleared of dead. . . . The stink of embers, stagnant water and dead flesh hung over the city for a month." No military purpose was served by the destruction, which took place after the Dutch army had surrendered. It was strictly a demonstration of craftsmanship, planned and executed to impress the citizens of Paris . . . and London.

NIGHT RAID

The sleepers humped down on the benches,
The daft boy was playing rummy with anyone he could get,
And the dancing girl said, "What I say is,
If there's a bomb made for YOU,
You're going to get it."
Someone muttered, "The bees are coming again."
Someone whispered beside me in the darkness,
"They're coming up from the east."
Way off the guns muttered distantly.

This was in the small hours, at the ebb.
And the dancing girl clicked her teeth like castanets
And said, "I don't mind life, believe me.
I like it. If there's any more to come,
I can take it and be glad of it."
She was shivering and laughing and throwing her head back.
On the pavement men looked up thoughtfully,
Making plausible conjectures. The night sky
Throbbed under the cool bandage of the searchlights.

DESMOND HAWKINS

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Functionalism and Naive Materialism in American Architecture

Alan Mather

I.

IN THE UNITED STATES, the work of designing buildings has, for the most part, reached such a depth of spiritlessness and poverty of imagination, that any structure which displays some influence of art draws an abnormal amount of attention to itself. It is a ruthless utilitarianism which seems to peer from the tens of thousands of windows ranged to vanishing points along the brick culverts which form our streets. Yet, the general architectural scene is not all in one piece. It is the purpose of this article to disentangle naive materialism from functionalism: the former being an expression of capitalism, and the latter, of scientific method, in architecture.

Functionalism consists in discovering the special characteristics of a group of people and then of designing a building so closely fitted to those group peculiarities as to create a new and socially expressive form or architectural type. It is Darwinism in architecture. Indeed, Louis Sullivan, one of the first to give expression to it as an idea, was a Darwinist.

Naive materialism is a severely forced, perhaps pathological attempt to deny importance to immaterial facts of consciousness. It is a natural part of the capitalism which abstracts isolated qualities of each individual to meet its special needs—and forgets the rest. The movement of business toward minute division of labor has pushed its way beyond the walls of the factory and into any part of our culture which has a relation, no matter how remote, to profit-making. Architecture has not escaped its influence. Business enterprise, concerned with reducing incidental costs of production now rationalizes housing into neat shelves whereon to set the working population in its non-working hours. Just as it exploits one or two simple movements of each worker on an assembly line, so does

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it utilize one or two structural elements in architecture—and condemns the rest to disuse. When people ask for more architecture than a barren concrete expression of the function "shelf" in a housing project, capitalism invents naive materialism to stop their mouths. It is a doctrine which holds that, in this mechanical era, emotion has no place in architectural design. Let sensibilities be bent into a liking for mechanical or routine assemblies of material! A faith that the assemblies are fundamentally right or predestined, the sensibilities merely ephemeral is the fundamental characteristic of naive materialism.

There are points at which naive materialism and functionalism overlap. But functionalism relates to social forms which grow out of *all* the natural needs of man. Naive materialism is concerned only with those attributes of men that are useful to capitalism.

There is naive materialism behind the calm resignation with which William F. Lamb describes his work of designing the Empire State Building: "The program was short enough—a fixed budget, no space more than 28 feet from window to corridor, as many stories of such space as possible, an exterior of limestone, and completion by May 1, 1931, which meant a year and six months from the beginning of sketches. The first of these requirements produced the mass of the building and the latter two the characteristics of its design."

There is naive materialism behind "Parkchester," the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's 129-acre investment in apartment house building in New York City which had for its architect no one man but a Board of Design consisting of an architect-banker, two builders, an engineer, a landscape architect and a production manager. An official of the company sat in at the meetings. *Safety,* the characteristic of all Metropolitan's investments was the watchword which the President handed down to the designers as they went to work. First they produced three different core plans containing the service elements of the buildings—stair wells, elevator shafts, public corridors, incinerators, slop sinks, etc. Then they drew up five basic wing plans, each containing two dwelling units. Hooking the wings to the cores and cores to wings they covered about thirty percent of the 129 acres with building. In a manner of speaking, the plans are faced with sheer brick walls

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carried to the height of seven, eight, nine, twelve or thirteen stories. At strategic locations and in the name of art, little statues project from the brickwork. In essence, Parkchester is a 129-acre field of brick dotted with standard-size metal casements. And it is hideous.

But to note this hideousness and to give the name naive materialism to the attitude which creates it is not our sole concern here. How far back in American architectural history does this attitude reach? The answer to that question will help us to determine the seriousness of the malady which afflicts our architecture.

II.

If we look back to the culture of Chicago in the Eighteen-eighties we may see, here and there, some prophetic images of the severely practical and unrelieved structures of today. From New

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England, the best Chicago architects had taken the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Or more accurately, they had borrowed Richardson's naturalistic and pragmatic tendencies—his strict attention to the strength, color and texture of materials, his effective placing of free, naturalistic, and original decoration. It was Richardson's inherently functional approach which was best suited to their work as engineers. For it must be remembered that these men of Chicago had developed the skyscraper and had solved the foundation problem presented by the bed of clay under the city. And before that, the speed required in reconstruction after the great fire of 1871 had put their theorizing to its severest test. They were practical men serving the most practical of American capitalists.

Yet, in the buildings and writings of John W. Root and Louis Sullivan, two celebrated Chicago architects, some difficulties in adjustment can be discerned. The Monadnock Building, one of the earliest skyscrapers, attained its stark simplicity only after Owen F. Aldis, the capitalist, had rejected Burnham and Root's first sketches because they were too ornate. And while it is true that Louis Sullivan fell in line with the functionalism demanded of the skyscraper architect, he had an uneasy sense that its reduction of a problem to its simplest elements, if too far continued, would finally forbid the sort of ornament which he had lavished on his own buildings. However, despite their qualms about the simplifications demanded by their Chicago clients, both Root and Sullivan were united in their dislike of the vulgar and conspicuous waste which was being displayed in the more fashionable buildings in New York.

Unfortunately for Root and Sullivan and other Chicago architects of the developing functional school, New York ideas were to have their temporary triumph. The buildings at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 set a vogue which was to last until 1918—the vogue of eclecticism or vulgar display. In his position as Chief of Construction, Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago imported Richard M. Hunt, Charles McKim and George B. Post to serve, with some Westerners, as the exposition's architects. Back in New York Hunt had built for the Astors, Vanderbilts and Goelets; McKim for the Villards, the Tiffanys and the *New York Herald;* and George B. Post had given the *New York World* a domed skyscraper. These men had been trained in Paris and it was the culture of Napoleon

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III's empire which they proceeded to deposit on the shores of Lake Michigan.

For the 1893 Fair they took the Paris Fair of 1889 as their prototype. Whited bastard and columnar fronts were arranged along the axis of a grand canal. To terminate the axis, Richard M. Hunt built a dome fit to put the one on the Invalides to shame. Yet they fell far behind the culture they imitated. At the Paris Fair, much had been done in using iron, concrete and terra cotta to lighten traditional stone forms. In the buildings, iron framework had been frankly exposed; Eiffel's Tower had been permitted to steal the show from the Beaux Arts domes and the statues. But the New Yorkers did everything to hide their ironwork. The French had experimented with colored terra cotta and cast stone, but Daniel Burnham's New Yorkers said "Let us make it all perfectly white." A "whitewash gang" was immediately set to blowing white paint on stuccoed columns, cornices and Francophile sculpture.

The effect of the Fair upon the millions who saw it is described by Sullivan: "These crowds were astonished. They beheld what was for them an amazing revelation of the architectural art, of which previously they in comparison had known nothing. To them it was a veritable Apocalypse, a message inspired from on high. Upon it their imagination shaped new ideals. They went away, spreading over the land, returning to their homes, each one of them carrying in his soul the shadow of a white cloud, each of them permeated by the most subtle and slow-acting of poisons; an imperceptible miasma within the white shadow of a higher culture."

The nature of the architecture which was to dominate the American scene between 1893 and 1918 was foreshadowed in the character of the two men who most influenced the design of the Fair. Daniel Burnham and Charles F. McKim were industrial entrepreneurs in architecture. Burnham represented the hard, pushing, spittoon-cluttered frontier capitalism in Chicago. McKim was part of the Wall Street-Fifth Avenue-Newport culture of the East which had borrowed its coloration from Paris. The influence of McKim on Burnham was considerable, while the influence of both men on the architecture of their time was enormous. Together they planned the Mall, the Lincoln Memorial and the Arlington Bridge in a composition which gives Washington so imperial a tone.

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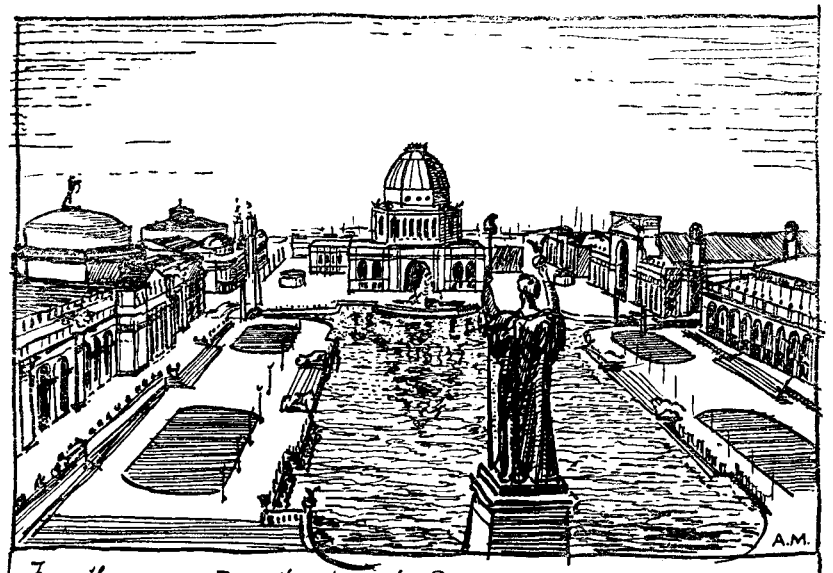
Before settling down to the profession, Dan Burnham spent some time on a mining venture in Nevada, ran unsuccessfully for the office of State Senator there, and later, back in Chicago, his home town, sold plate glass. In 1872, Burnham's father, anxious to curb his son's roving disposition, got him a job with a firm of architects which, with others, was busily renovating the fire-gutted city. Working by day for other architects and at night for themselves in their own wretched, tiny, unheated office, Burnham and



For the 1893 Fair they took the Paris Fair of 1889 as their prototype. Whited bastard and columnar fronts were arranged along the axis of a grand canal. To terminate the axis, Richard M. Hunt built a dome fit to put the one on the Invalides to shame.

his partner, John W. Root, built up enough reserve in the form of cash and clients to stay in business on a small scale. The event which opened a new chapter in the history of the firm was Burnham's marriage to the daughter of John B. Sherman, one of their rich clients. Commission followed commission until by 1893 Burnham & Root had built about forty million dollars worth of buildings, most of them in Chicago. To his partner, Burnham delegated the tasks of design, taking upon himself business dealings with clients. Between them they apportioned detail and routine

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work to a large staff of draftsmen, designers and job superintendents.

Burnham was impressed to the point of reverence by the artistic powers of McKim, H. H. Richardson, Charles Atwood, Augustus St. Gaudens; he was servile before the superior "culture" of the New York architects. Of a meeting in 1891 of the Board of Architects of the World's Fair, Sullivan wrote: "Burnham arose to make his address of welcome. He was not facile on his feet, but it soon became noticeable that he was progressively and grossly apologizing to the Eastern men for the presence of their benighted brethren of the West. Dick Hunt interrupted, 'Hell, we haven't come out here on a missionary expedition. Let's get to work.' " And Sullivan remarks: "During this period there was well under way the formation of mergers, combinations and trusts in the industrial world. The only architect in Chicago to catch the significance of the movement was Daniel Burnham, for in its tendency toward bigness, organization, delegation, and intense commercialism, he sensed the reciprocal workings of his own mind."

When Dan Burnham the crude Chicagoan made his obeisances to the New York architects, Charles Follen McKim had already paid his reverences to Europe in general and Rome in particular. The son of a Philadelphia Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Abolitionist minister and a well-to-do Quakeress, he had been well enough founded upon money and a family tradition of intellectual leadership to get a sense of being aristocratic in the United States and not entirely lost in Europe. From Harvard University he went to an atelier in Paris. He travelled in France, Germany and Italy, observing the architecture en route. Back in America, he entered the office of Henry Hobson Richardson to learn receptively of that great architect's conception of architecture as a fine art—a conception which raised the contemporary status of architect from that of draftsman-builder to that of Artist. Consistently, in his own firm of McKim, Mead & White he assembled around him for every job a constellation of painters, metal craftsmen and masons. From the obsequious accounts of his biographers, the extent of his ruthlessness in dealing with subcontractors can be faintly discerned.

As his business expanded McKim was faced with the double problem of making people like a standardized style of architecture and of training men to draw it. He decided that the monuments of

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ancient and Renaissance Rome had an esthetic future if adapted in his office to serve modern building functions. At the same time the "elements" of Roman architecture could be grasped easily by draftsmen and designers. In 1889 he wrote to Professor William R. Ware, head of the architectural department at Columbia University: "I am very anxious to see brought about the Roman course of which we talked, and I am ready to assist you in taking active steps to that end whenever you will see me again. If you will suggest a time I will bring up with me a list of typical buildings which might enter into it and the knowledge of which would become a liberal education to any man." Finally, he met the problem of getting a supply of draftsmen who could meet his requirements by establishing the American Academy in Rome and by sending some of his own employees to it.

The success of McKim, Mead, and White grew out of the fact that its designers could adapt Italian "precedents" with more finesse and "good taste" than anybody else. Because of the supreme conscientiousness, the fastidiousness with which he went about it, McKim elevated plagiarism of the dead to the status of a virtuous act. With all the crushing strength granted only to the sweetly persistent ("Blarney Charles" was what Augustus St. Gaudens called him) he "sold" a version of the town hall at Verona to the *New York Herald;* of the Villa Medici to New York State for its pavilion at the Fair of 1893. From him the Pennsylvania Railroad got a Roman Bath, Columbia University library, a squat Pantheon. Had it not been for the opposition of Dr. S. S. Goldwater, the hospital planning expert and later La Guardia's Commissioner of Hospitals, Bellevue Hospital would have acquired the dome of St. Peter's. And when the building committee of the University Club in New York decided that they didn't like the lettered inscriptions under the many carved stone collegiate seals which, as the plans showed, were to decorate their building—that they just *didn't want* that lettering—Charles McKim set some of his office help to listing the Renaissance buildings of repute which were decorated that way. The resistance of the committee collapsed under the weight of the architect's scholarship: the lettering is on that building.

Those architects of the Chicago school who were unable to adapt themselves to the eclecticism which McKim and Burnham had made popular, lost commissions. Louis Sullivan, with fewer

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buildings to design, took to print. In 1896, in an essay "The Tall Building Artistically Considered" he took an uncompromising stand against borrowed culture in architecture and concluded that form should follow function. His one time partner, Dankmar Adler, likewise lacking commissions, answered with an essay to show that Sullivan was opposing the doctrine of McKim and Burnham with an equally fanatic credo. He insisted that if Sullivan's functionalism were followed to its logical conclusion "We would have an architecture somewhat more scientific and vastly more practical, but as trite and as devoid of creative impulse as the architecture founded on the principle, *Form follows historic precedent.*"

But while Adler and Sullivan argued, the forces which gave the original impetus to Sullivan's functionalism were at work undermining the French bourgeois culture which the World's Fair of 1893 has popularized. Building construction in the skyscraper field began to pass out of the hands of small contractors who had come up from the ranks of bricklayers and carpenters, and into the hands of skillful engineer-entrepreneurs. These new men had observed that there was not enough cordination between the architect and builder. Paul Starrett, a rising contractor, noticed that, as a rule, the architect always tried to drive down contract figures to suit the owner but contributed little to synchronization—the prime requisite of speedy and low-cost skyscraper construction. "Speed in building construction is based primarily on two things," said he. "One is looking ahead and knowing when you must have your materials and the other is actually having them on the site as required. It is also generally true that a working force give best results when they find materials coming about as fast as they can handle them, or a little faster. For the contractor it is speedy completion that means a money profit." Soon after the first World War the general contract system reached its fullest development. Under this, the contractor became very much like a field marshal. As William Starrett, the brother of Paul put it: "Building skyscrapers is the nearest peace-time equivalent of war. . . . It is a staff operation, a problem in logistics as the soldiers say—the getting up of supplies, the performance of a task and the removal of waste."

In such organization the architect was relegated to designing

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tasks. And even in design his authority was curbed as the judgment of builders and real estate agents gained greater influence. Today on such large scale work as "Parkchester" they serve as simple cogs in the construction machinery.

III.

The record as I have written it here is of the arrest between 1893 and 1918 of a movement toward functionalism which had been gathering momentum in Chicago of the 'Eighties. The halt was called by New York architects serving a plutocracy which borrowed its culture from France. Not having acquired full confidence in its own pragmatic culture, the people of Chicago and the Western States accepted the esthetic leadership of the New Yorkers—a leadership asserted or usurped at the World's Fair of 1893. From that date a studious eclecticism marks its rise.

But the undercurrent of hard, practical, businesslike thinking which had produced the Monadnock Building in Chicago continued under the eclectic surface. The American capitalists had adopted the showy, regal, bourgeois culture of France for general purposes. But in their quieter moments—in the design of their warehouses and office buildings, they retained an august puritanism. Gradually the wave of practicality gathered strength as it was discovered that, here and there, the conspicuous waste of people like McKim, Burnham and Stanford White was an impediment to business. These architects couldn't organize large scale and speedy building construction, contractors could. So the word of the contractors became law. The wave of practicality advanced over the receding one of showy eclecticism.

This record does not mean that McKim as a leader of the eclectic architects had not adopted practical methods. He had been forced into a big volume of production in order to stay in competitive business at all. He rationalized or depersonalized "style"—put the elements of Roman architecture on the assembly line and started a training school for design mechanics. But such depersonalization of style is a rather contradictory activity. It soon appeared that the rustications, cornices, cartouches and belt courses with which McKim's journeymen enriched buildings—were all rather dead. Hence it was not for practical reasons alone that

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the bourgeoisie did away with eclecticism: esthetic perceptions had their influence also.

The extent to which the bourgeoisie have done away with eclecticism is shown in Parkchester and the Empire State Building. Here the simplifications which Louis Sullivan accepted as being better than the vulgarities of the New Yorkers have been carried to a conclusion which he feared. Here is what Dankmar Adler called "an architecture somewhat more scientific and vastly more practical, but as trite and as devoid of creative impulse as the architecture founded on the principle, Form follows historic precedent."

But how much, in these buildings, is *functionalism* and how much is *naive materialism?* How does one differ from the other?

Functionalism has limited but important applications. It rejects the custom of developing first a formal composition—a thing of domes, axes, balanced wings—and then of twisting functions to suit it. For axial symmetry it substitutes a combination of enclosed space relationships which gives a *sense* of balanced or integrated functions. It analyzes the varied needs of building occupants, breaking them down into their component parts. By so doing, it frequently suggests new combinations or divisions of functions, new combination or separation of spaces. Functionalism, by removing architecture from idealized, formal and regal conceptions has made man the measure of all things. But its limitations are those of scientific method, which can tell that if you do so and so, such and such will happen. That is, the decision as to whether the end product is any good or not still rests with the esthetic sense.

Under naive materialism, the definition of functionalism is strained to include an agreement with the requirements of capitalism. Parkchester might be called a triumph of modern functionalism under a definition which included the financial ideology of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Parkchester may be functional to a degree, but only the harsh environing policy of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company could produce such hideousness.

But above all, naive materialism flouts the immaterial facts of consciousness and denies place to emotion in architecture. Yet, an emotional strength no less than that found in the work of great

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architects in the past can be sensed in the designs of some contemporaries. For example, Howard Robertson writes: "We may refer to many of Erich Mendelsohn's designs, in which he employs a favorite—and very effective—device of terminating a great sweep of horizontal facade by a sudden convolution at one end, which brings it to a vibrating stop without the aid of the cruder device of butting it against another element, such as a vertical pier or pylon. This treatment embodies both inflection and punctuation, the former a preliminary to the latter. In his interiors, Mendelsohn's effects are equally powerful. He succeeds in drawing out his horizontal lines to their fullest extent, almost at times to the breaking point, and then, while the eye of the spectator is in full pursuit of these vigorous flowing lines, Mendelsohn arrests them, makes them as it were recoil upon themselves, and always at just the right point. Mendelsohn knows how to play upon form as a violinist plays upon a string. He can produce vibrations from a single line."

It is unfortunate that the public has looked for the quality of the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier in their writings. To gain readers Wright has thought it necessary to quote Thoreau, while Le Corbusier has put some of the popular naive materialism into his books. In *Towards A New Architecture* Le Corbusier has one chapter on mass production, another on the economy of airplane design. Those were the chapters read most attentively in America. "The house is a machine for living in" is the slogan which stuck. People passed over the part about Michael Angelo—they had heard *that* before. How unfortunate! If you will look at Le Corbusier's houses you will see that a Cubist, having found paint and canvas inadequate for that kind of expression, has taken to building construction. For him, planes, cubes, cylinders skillfully juxtaposed cast an endless variety of shadows. Curved surfaces of field stone intersect planes of coarse textured stucco. Great cubes bounded on one side by an expanse of glass and on another by a wall of stucco are carried off the earth on round concrete stilts as if to give emphasis to their quality as cubes. The long thin rectangle of a ribbon window stops near the giant square of a multi-paned glass studio wall—each has its proportion fixed with harmonious ratio to the rectangle of stucco wall in which they are placed. No Cubists—Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies Van

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der Rohe are the iconoclasts of interior partitions and exterior walls. Using all the power of steel and concrete, they run roof planes far out beyond columns and curved partitions. They vary materials so that one plane asserts its independence of another though all are bound in a balanced composition. Mies Van der Rohe exploits broad surfaces of marble, opaque, translucent and transparent glass, curtain and reflecting pool for all they are worth in careful combination—as decoration. These men use the landscape for their canvas.

But it is this sensitiveness to the effects of texture, color, mass and line which naive materialism strives to eliminate. And its strident demands have been made not just since the days of the first World War but since the 'Eighties and beyond. In the time of Louis Sullivan and John W. Root it seemed to meet the requirements of natural functions better than the eclectic products of the Beaux Arts-trained architects. For what it offered against the shams of McKim and Burnham, Sullivan argued in its favor, great as his qualms for its future may have been. But with eclecticism conquered, it now appears that the course of naive materialism had been only incidentally functional and that its true aim had been the reduction of architecture to a standardized profitable pattern for universal application. When a distinction between these two once seemingly parallel but now divergent tendencies in architecture is made, then and then only can we hope to know how to combat the hideousness which permeates so much of our building.

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Cross Country: Notes on a Journey

Robert Fitzgerald

I.

DRIVING EAST we were lucky. With no particular sense of the country, simply wanting to avoid cities, we left the lakeshore east of Chicago and went south a little way, winding through soft and quiet Indiana hills and small towns. The highway we hooked into was U. S. 6, a good road that might have been a country road for all the traffic we saw on it. This was in the third week of September, warm, sweet and hazy, the corn not yet husked but about everything else in, of course, and what seemed a good many new litters of small, pale pigs.

In that country, that is in northern Indiana and Ohio before Ohio goes industrial, the stateliest thing you come to is the county seat. There is a grove on the prairie a long way off and the trees of the grove are still green and leafy at this time of year and high over the foliage, really quite high, you see the court house glimmering. Those we saw were thoroughly post classical, built up in an extravagance of tiers, surmounted by a mansard or hybrid dome and usually a rain-darkened Justice suspending her scales.

In these small towns the court house still dominates its square. In towns that have had their boom, like my own home town, one or more business buildings of considerable height and slick stonework overshadow it. Hitching posts are rare anywhere, but you will still see them in some of these towns. I can remark, irrelevantly, that there seem to be no kids with B-B guns. When I was young I spent many profitable afternoons potting sparrows out of the maple trees around our court house. There was no lawn to speak of, only grey dust for a sparrow to fall in. It was dust of a fine, downy quality and there was nearly as much of it inside the court house as outside—dust and tobacco juice.

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On this route you can avoid our industrial greatness about as far as Akron, but no farther. Once over the rim of the valley and definitely in the smoke, we didn't come out for miles though we tacked around the center of that city. As it happened, we got a good look at the air field and the dirigible hangar, dark and profoundly large and profoundly empty. Little trainer planes were taking off from the dusk at the far end of the field, putt-putting over us at a low altitude in the afternoon light and easing down again for their landings.

That night we had dinner and slept at an inn in the country a few miles west of Youngstown. It was one of those huge old houses for which

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no adequate use exists any more except that of Rooms. As usual, the commanding presence was that of the Mrs., though as usual the Mr. was permitted to proffer the guest book and take the money ($1 per head). Sometimes the Mr. will help bring in your suitcases, but it was evident that Mr. Q. was above that. He had a tiny earphone with a black ribbon, which added to his distinguished, disgruntled appearance.

In the course of our after-dinner conversation with Mrs. Q. (Mr. Q. took out early and silently) it appeared that they owned two cars, that their son-in-law was High Up in the Masons and often brought big parties of men to dinner there. The dining room was listed in Douglas Hines. Mrs. Q. talked to us without pause for nearly three hours, covering the history of her family, her marriage, her adventures and her opinions. She was Dutch, robust, white-haired, with a clear, rolling brown eye and a shrewd, final way of shutting her mouth, when she did so. She told us that she wasn't afraid of anything. "No, sir, I'm not," which was not as gratuitous as it might seem. The house was lonely, and it was on the highroad between two tough cities. Professional stick-up men had twice given it their attentions. Mr. Q., she told us, had a mild appearance but was terrible when aroused. What was more illuminating was her remark, with dropped, placid voice, that every year they drove to Boston to visit "mother Church." I had never heard it referred to as such before.

There was nothing hoodooed about Mrs. Q. Her son-in-law was for Willkie, but she knew her mind on that subject. "Why, he's just like a little boy," she said. "This is no time to get those South Americans mad at us." She winked, and then both her eyelids came down like an umpire's hands saying "Safe." She hunted up the day's paper, which we had not seen, and showed us the shot of Willkie and the calves and the sign reading THIS IS *NOT* ARGENTINE BEEF.

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The pictures on the walls of tourist homes are often enough of a low and God-awful order. In our room here there was one of a different quality. Faded to a ghostly silver-sepia, it had apparently been an illustration in one of the literary magazines, Harper's or Scribner's, of some year in the '90s or early 1900s. We could barely see but could not decipher the signature. At the foot of a rich staircase a ringletted, smiling child gazed up and to the right, lifting its arms. Behind, and several steps up the stairs, a girl of say twelve, her dark hair worn in a semi-adult knot and a bow, dressed in a white middy with a stock or bib, stood proudly and seriously facing out and warding back against the stair wall at her side another little girl of the same age, this one golden-haired and giggly.

Animation, mystery and good drawing, like an adumbrated moment in Henry James. Sentimental, too; yet now in 1940 one could see the lightness and an effect something like irony. Perhaps it was the fadedness. Even for that period, which was certainly the happiest in American illustration, this seemed extraordinary work.

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Once beyond Youngstown we decided not to stick to the main road for Scranton but to bear up to the north along the Alleghany. We saw there in that narrow, wooded valley, on a disused siding, a quarter of a mile of caved-in coke ovens and an abandoned plant building bearing the date, 1917, in block letters in the yellow brick. In the shadow under the ridge it was cold along the river. It was the route Washington traveled on foot in midwinter when he was 21, carrying the Governor of Virginia's message to the French. In the afternoon we came out on the sunnier uplands of southwestern New York, the sweeping farmland on the watershed between the Alleghany and Susquehanna Rivers.

These river valleys and that of the Delaware, all three of which you will follow on the road that runs through Olean, Corning, Elmira and Binghamton toward the Hudson, were once thoroughfares for the most formidable of North American Indian tribes. It was Iroquois country, the country of the Five Nations and of the Algonquins. The war parties snaked down the valleys; the English fought up them toward Canada. Parkman is the Homer of those centuries. The valley farms are still not such an encroachment on the wild mountains that you cannot easily see how it was.

In the towns, now, there were a few 18th Century houses, and also in the towns it was Autumn. Yellow autumn, not yet quite turned, the leaves not yet in showers but blowing down in greater numbers, not in bonfires yet but already making drifts in the gutters. Driving out of Elmira in the bright morning, along the broad street that had been the best residential street until they ran the highway through it, we passed many groups of children hugging schoolbooks, bunching at corners or straggling along with their coats open and belts dangling, hair blowing, sometimes chasing each other. Their movement on that breezy morning was like the leaves' movement.

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It is curious by what outcroppings the City announces itself. We were about as far east as Port Jervis and north of it, west of Newburgh, when we noticed the first monstrous summer hotel. Then quickly within a few miles we saw half a dozen of these resorts, gimcracky in build, some ornamented with fresh paint, exhibiting to the grave hills their pre-War charms. The vulgarity of one section is not that of another; the winning tone of this was established by a prevalent sign that said Rooms for Gentiles, and by another: ½ Mile to Ma & Pa's Place. One hotel turned out to be a sanitarium.

The View over which half a century's urban exclamations hung appallingly in the air was obscured for us after lunch by a driving thunderstorm. In the rain we drove through Bear Mountain Park, seeing one other car, and crossed the great bridge over the Hudson into sunlight pure and level from the opening blue of the west. Below us, washed in that light, Peekskill's river-level harbor and tiny buildings shone like a Dutch seascape or a picture by Claude Lorrain. The salt, fishy smell surprised us as we came down to the marshes on the riverside.

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The Henrik Hudson Parkway is admirable as an experience in smoothly moving solid geometry, but my feeling about it as we bored along in the evening was principally that They could have it. This feeling became full and profane as we entered the big traffic that flows down the elevated west side highway, with the tail lights of that solid, elastic stream of cars looking each like a little red coal being transported politely to Hell. Credentials. The metallic rumble and vibration of that thoroughfare can be physically painful. At 19th Street we were decanted out of it and dodged south and west through the maze of streets, seeing among other things a gang of kids shooting craps under a street light. The front hall of our apartment house, when we got there, looked as if it had been altered in all proportions while we were away. Our ears were still singing and it took us twenty-four hours to get over thinking that the whole place had been magicked. Certainly it was no longer ours.

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The night before we left New York we had a warm, well-knit time with some friends at a pleasant, expensive place. New York is perhaps the place for that kind of festivity, which is properly rare. As to what I think about New York in the large, there is no need to insist on it.

II.

I do not remember whether Henry Adams wrote very much about early autumn in Washington, but it is a finer season there than the spring of which he did, memorably, write. It is the season in whose still warm nights you should walk slowly along the streets where the Negroes live in their doorways and in the little yards, dark, dark without the glimmer of faces, without lights in the houses, silent often or merely audible as if the whole street sighed. It is the season in which you should sit on a bench in Lafayette Park in the sun, seeing the sun on the peaceful lawns of the White House, watching the squirrels ripple across the grass and the pigeons walk on the paths with their pecking motion.

We had no time to do these things.

Except for the traffic, which was more crowded and crosswise than ever, the city seemed not much changed. On the roads leading in there were new drive-in eating places, very elaborate and brisk, with enormous parking areas, like those around Los Angeles. Hot Shoppes, they were called. I wonder if the President ever stopped at a Hot Shoppe. The hamburgers were very good.

On Friday morning I went to the press conference. The big anteroom was about half full of reporters, which makes a good many reporters, among them a goodlooking girl in a dark suit who seemed to be a new one. The two I knew were T., just back from the Willkie train (disclaiming loss of voice), and J., down from New York on one of his occasional visits, looking things over with his usual genial, sinoidal expression. One of the plainclothes guards came up quietly to make sure of his identity. Otherwise the guards were extremely unobtrusive. Obtruding for them, I sup-

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pose, were two enormous shield trophies for pistol shooting that rested on the big round table.

Not having the foresight to get close to the proper door, we were among the last to pass in to the President's room and had several rows of backs between us and him. I felt no particular tension in the room. The questioners spoke fairly loudly but the President's voice in some responses was too low to be heard clearly as far back as I was standing. It was deliberative, conversational and even, without any faltering or even much hesitation. The voice was that of a man well-informed as to his business. What appeared to be a stock dismissal of cock-and-bull stories was "That's another one of Them." It was the day on which he quoted Herbert Matthews' *Times* dispatch to the effect that the Axis desired his defeat in the election. "Mr. President, have you any comment to make . . . Mr. President, have you any reason to believe . . ." No soap. He was just quoting it.

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I find that everyone, or almost everyone, agrees that tourist cabins are in general a great advance on hotels. In the darkness and smoke of the towns that evening the hotels we had seen resembled dilapidated fire houses, some of them absolutely lightless, tremendously inviting to curiosity but not probable for a night's rest. Tourist homes were few and frowsy. On the hillside above the filling station and diner where we stopped to eat the Cozy Rest Cabins looked clean and independent, each with its bald electric light above the door. A boy in nifty white dungarees ushered us into Cabin 14 and lighted the oil stove, which in ten minutes had not only taken the chill off but was in a fair way to bake us alive.

In this, as in the shower, the bed reading lamp, the elementary and sufficient comforts of the place, our first cabin closely resembled all the later ones. As an institution they were new to me because it had been eight years since I had driven any long distance overland. And they seemed to me a manifestation of the good sense and excellence of what is, in a way, a civilization by itself: the U. S. highway. On which the rules are simple, pleasurable, serious and almost universally observed; on which privacy is respected and economy a matter of course; on which pilgrimage, one of the profound symbols of human life, appears under the guises of migration and tourism, affording that sort of poetry to the people.

The other aspect of it is plainer: you will pass through many towns in which the only new buildings, and the ones best kept up, are the Kabin Kamp and the Standard Oil station.

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In the morning we saw coal tips on the opposite hill. It was a clear day and as the hills diminished we came down to the Ohio and crossed it where it flowed between meadows and willows, winding broad and blue across the beautiful land. The richness of the autumn was greater here than in any region we had seen, the sumac deep red at the roadside and purple on more distant mounds of land, the maples heavily red golden in the sunlight, shelling off the leaves in thick, glittering gusts across the

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road when the wind blew. We drove West North West and passed wide around Chicago the next evening.

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The rolling country of Wisconsin builds up toward the west in a cool table land that at times gives you a sense of northern altitude. Then this falls away abruptly to the Mississippi. The river as we crossed it looked clear and wild; it was full of sandbars, perhaps at low water here because of the two neat hydroelectric dams the Army has built upriver.

All across Iowa the concrete Lincoln Highway had, instead of level shoulders, a low up-curving curb on either side. Whatever the intention, it served to make the road seem narrower and groove-like. Driving in this groove toward late afternoon and about a hundred miles west of the river we became aware that the land had begun to rise and fall in mile-long regular swells; over these for hours the road cut straight west into the glare, into the sunset, into an afterglow of remarkable clarity and, for us pursuing, of remarkable duration. Against the polish of that light the finest detail of windmills, roofs and foliage, even hilltop blades of corn or grass, seemed graven in pure substance of darkness. On the road behind us the painted center line shone brightly under a rising full moon.

It was a frosty night. At Shady Oaks Cabins we parked the car's radiator close to our cabin wall and left the stove on low in the cabin all night. On the way to town for breakfast we stopped at a frame schoolhouse where men were registering, but the line ahead of me was too long. At mid-morning, in Nevada, Iowa, cruising slowly down the main street on whose curbs little flags fluttered from a hundred flagpoles, we found a County Court House where there wasn't much activity. A young man painfully took down my data and printed it slowly on a card. His colleagues on the registration board were three for-the-moment-idle ladies, one of whom, continually touching up her hair, beamed, passed pleasantries and seemed about to cluck. The headmistress was one Mrs. H., a keen little grey-haired number who decided doubtful points. The county clerk, I suppose. Musing she said she suspected it was a mighty important day.

I suspected this myself and took a good look at the scene when I came out: a yellow brick court house with a terraced yard toward whose corners pointed respectively a captured German field piece from 1918 and a Civil War cannon. Dead, black, decorative iron. It was a beautiful day.

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It begins, the West does, in Nebraska. We crossed the Missouri north of Omaha and were soon driving parallel with the scrubby willow growth along the North Platte, the bald prairie cut off by low elevations to the north which were obviously perfect for the first appearance of Cheyennes. Less readily recognizable were several surprisingly new, clean, healthy looking towns, Columbus, Central City and Grand Island. At Grand Island we had dinner in the hotel that was Democratic Headquarters while a high school band (girls in white cowboy boots) thumped and tootled in the starry evening outside Republican Headquarters. The big front page story

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in the newspaper concerned the shooting of a sheriff upstate and the posse's pursuit—aided by Lem So-and-So in his cabin monoplane.

That night we stayed in Kearney and in the morning at breakfast encountered pancakes one foot in diameter.

That morning we crossed the North Platte River. It had no water in it. As we drove on southwest into western Kansas we hit bad lands, the most gullied and gutted we had ever seen. The few fields of corn looked as if a blowtorch had been taken to them when the stalks were two feet high. The land darkened and widened to an immensity of brown, treeless horizon. Our hearts sank. Our cat, who had taken with resignation his first couple of days in the automobile, woke up with dust in his nose and began to yip.

It was surprising here again to find towns leafy and unstricken, though by no means such belles as we had seen in Nebraska. At a filling station in Oakley (named for Annie?) we heard that last Sunday had been as warm as this and Monday night it froze. Yes, sir, the wind was a-blowin and she went right down. We discovered that we were already 3,000 feet above sea-level: higher than any of those mountains in West Virginia. In the afternoon we were going straight west on U. S. 40 and then we knew we were climbing. I have seen no writing that did justice to the gradual tremendous tilt that becomes perceptible here and ends in the continental divide. Soon it was not so much bad lands as open range on which the horizon acquired rim beyond rim of blue distance wherein cattle appeared like tiny spillings of black birdshot. The sky, which had been clear and hot, filmed over in the northwest but the cloudfilm missed the sun and again we drove against the glare. In Colorado, a little beyond a town called First View, we sighted the mountains.

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Drinking cokes at Kit Carson we were fastened on by the storekeeper, who wanted a political discussion. Colorado, he said, was swinging to Willkie, "especially since this conscription yesterday." Yes, sir, that was what did it with a lot of folks. He had a square, meaty face and hard grey eyes and spoke very repressedly in modified journalese. His composure and grammar alike cracked a little when he spoke of the Communists who had taken over the New Deal.

He had read a book called *The Fifth Column* by someone named Camp wasn't it who had made a lifelong study of subversive organizations. This book had the Dies list of Communists in high places in the government and it had this fellow's own list, right up at the front of the book. He sure wished he had that book to show us, because it wouldn't have taken only a glance for us to get the drift of it. Where had he got it? Fellow brought it around. Fellow took it away again or else he'd like to show it to us. Now a book couldn't be published like that and not tell the truth, could it?

We were in a hurry to get to La Junta for the night.

I began to feel as if I were being invited to show my colors.

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I said a book could very easily be published like that and still be full of lies. I had seen the official Dies Committee report and it was pretty tame.

Now he said this fellow not only listed men like Ickes and Jackson but he said there were others too high to be named. Now if there were others higher than Ickes and Jackson that certainly made you wonder, didn't it.

I was holding the screen door open with one foot out. I said I thought we all ought to be careful to be accurate in what we said about the President and the Cabinet. Maybe there was something in that book but it went too far. I closed the screen door and we drove on.

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It was about noon next day when we looked down into New Mexico. The main road through Raton Pass was blocked off and we detoured on a mountain road that wriggled upward all morning, slow going on a hard grade. Our ears popped a great deal. On the last shoulder at about 8,000 feet we could see, I imagine, at least 150 miles to the southward. There was something faintly submarine about land masses seen through such a depth of atmosphere; and the masses themselves were weird, rising softly sculptured and often level-topped from the desert, grey melting to violet. Very distant to the west were stonier and more darkly wooded mountains with pale snow on some of the crests.

Once down on the plain our road ribboned south through what we now saw was not desert but grazing land, with here and there along the road a "cattle guard" in place of a gate. A cattle guard is a grill of iron bars placed in the road where the road cuts through a fence. Cattle cannot keep their footing on the grill. Informed by a big historical sign, we looked more closely at the range to the right of the road and saw, sure enough, overgrown but still deep and distinct, the ruts worn there by ox carts sixty, seventy, eighty years ago when this was the Santa Fe Trail. There must have been a dozen wheel tracks and they ran along beside us for many miles. Once or twice they swung away from the motor road and we could see the wide trail curving off around a swell of land.

At Las Vegas we told a filling station hand that we understood Santa Fe was higher than Las Vegas. "Same altitude," he said. "Higher living." All right, you dead-pan artist.

The road went west and north into rounded mountains covered with the shrub known as piñon. A crazily lettered sign directed us to stop at the Oldest Well in the U. S., then we passed a crude-looking stockade, then another sign cheerfully commanded Turn Back You Have Passed the Oldest Well in the U. S. There were low adobe houses and Indians. Gates appeared to El Rancho this and El Rancho that. At about 4:30 we came over a rise and saw the Rio Grande Valley very broad and warm between the mountains. The late sun streamed over it from a peaceful west. The odor of cedar smoke, which was new to us and is very like incense, came into the car occasionally in currents of the clear air.

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Art Chronicle

Metropolitan Storage Warehouse

AMONG THE PHENOMENA of present-day cultural activity none is more curious than the prevalent public apathy regarding the Metropolitan Museum of Art. While the unfortunate opera-house of the same name is dissected almost nightly, the Metropolitan Museum, which swallows up a large annual grant from the city treasury, darkens the upper reaches of Fifth Avenue with such a forbidding monumentality that it has become as removed from esthetic reproach as the Manhattan Storage Warehouse. No one seems concerned over the dwindling annual attendance, which has now fallen below that of the Chicago Art Institute, although Chicago has half the population of New York.

I was recently recollecting that I myself had felt no impulse to penetrate those gloomy precincts for a number of years (except for an occasional visit to the Egyptian sculpture-hall) when a chance encounter with the November-1940 Bulletin sent me thither with an alacrity I would not have believed possible. It was surely inconceivable that an organization with even the most modest esthetic standards could sponsor anything as insulting to human taste as this ordinarily innocuous pamphlet. (The mood was appropriately set by the drawing on the cover, which depicted a group of gentlemen in business-suits inspecting the museum's main entrance-hall, conceived with about the stylistic distinction of a twenty-year-old advertisement for Hart, Schaffner & Marx.) The remainder of the bulletin, as a sort of homage to National Art Week, was given over to American paintings from the museum's permanent collection.

A glance at the galleries themselves showed that the bulletin had done complete justice. The collection was reminiscent of an annual show at some conservative summer art-colony. There was an obvious attempt on the part of the purchasing committee to gather in works that were cheery and 'modern,' and this showed a difference in kind at least from what one used to encounter in these halls. But tasteless splashes of raucous color fitted into contours that serve no purpose beyond the illustration of nature are not enough to make a picture 'modern,' and I for one am in no way cheered by gay colors unless they are controlled into a compositional fabric with some personal distinction. Passing from canvas to canvas, one endeavors to puzzle out the esthetic criterion that determined the selection of each individual work. It could hardly have been because the artists were well-known, for many of them were unheard-of. (Later inquiry disclosed that several were executed by young ladies in their early twenties, whose

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accomplishments approximately paralleled that of countless other students in their second year at art-school.) Yet others were mature works by painters who have become accepted at least in Whitney Museum circles, and it would be difficult to argue that these stood out with any particular distinction. One is tempted to speculate on the means by which certain works could have found their way into the museum. For instance, the rosy portrait of an amiable woman with pince-nez glasses by one Catherine Wentworth must surely have been presented by a Trustee's wife when the director's back was turned,—but no, it can be read on the shiny gold plaque, *purchased in 1940!* Why, among all the thousands of awful female portraits turned out every year did the museum decide to buy this particular one? The only discernible trend (aside from an avoidance of anything esthetically controversial) that could account for some of the selections was a fondness for works with melodramatic titles, which is the lowest form of bait for an ignorant public. I might single out a noxious illustration by Dubois, depicting a flapper escorted by an aged reprobate in evening clothes, entitled *the Doll and the Monster.* Some form of booby prize should certainly be awarded to Doris Lee for her rendering of a group of fat ladies with umbrellas jumping out of a burning dirigible over New York Harbor, which is one of the worst pictures ever painted.

As there was still an hour before closing time I retired to other parts of the museum. The collection of American sculpture gives the impression that the sculptors of this heroic land respond exclusively to nude débutantes, horses, babies, and college-boys. My immediate goal was the gallery of Hindu and Khmer sculpture, on which I was counting as a potent antidote for what I had just been seeing. These works from the most buoyant period of art-history were, as always, rewarding in themselves, but the director in his effort to spread cheer throughout the museum had recently installed them in a new hall with walls of such a screeching greenish-blue that everything set against them became sweetened and devitalized.

The Old Master Galleries, where almost every face was familiar, offered no surprises, and even the walls were sobre in color. Many of the heavy-framed pictures retained the authentic quality that I continue to admire,—the Raphael, the Bronzino, the Poussins, the good Spanish collection (thanks to the Havemeyers), the fairly good impressionist rooms (also thanks to the Havemeyers), the unexpectedly good late-Venetian selection, the relatively poor galleries of primitives. And for the first time I saw the little Watteau (decidedly Class-B) that the museum recently bought from Leningrad (for a reputed $250,000) representing one of Stalin's victories over the democracies.

Perhaps the character of the Metropolitan can best be summarized from a listing of its special exhibitions; these can usually be regarded as the real test of a museum's ingenuity and imaginative scope. An organization with such vast financial backing might reasonably be expected to organize shows that would compare occasionally with those formerly staged by Burlington House in London, with its definitive surveys of Chinese,

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French, and Italian art. Specifically the Metropolitan might have housed the wonderful Persian exhibition which last spring the Iranian Society was forced to show amidst the dismal tawdriness of the old Union Club. And even with advanced esthetic tendencies tabooed the Metropolitan would have been the logical place for most of what the Museum of Modern Art has been showing, from the art of ancient Mexico to Van Gogh. Without further comment I now quote the following exhibition-schedule from the 1939 annual report:

Victorian and Edwardian Dresses, March 11-April 16
Life in America for three hundred years, April 24-Jan. 1, 1940
Sculpture by Henry Clews, Jr., May 8-August 27
Warburg Collection of Prints, May 8-October 22
Work of Students in Art Division, W.P.A. Adult Education Program, June 2-23
Turkish Textiles, Sept. 9-Oct. 22
Daguerreotypes and Photographs, Nov. 4-Dec. 7
Woodcuts from the Museum's Collection, Nov. 18-Dec. 31

and lastly, as the big show for December and early January, when New York becomes the Mecca for students and visitors in search of cultural enlightenment, the director gathers all works from various parts of the museum that suggest Christmas and hangs them together in a single gallery.

Sculpture by Theodore Roszak

Before attending the two exhibitions recently held simultaneously by Roszak I had received information about them from two opposing sources. The newspaper critics showed an interest such as they rarely betray toward abstract sculpture; and on the other hand the artists whom I queried used such adjectives as 'slick' and 'commercial.' I am writing about Roszak because I do not consider either of these views to be adequate or discerning.

Roszak constructs sculptures and high-reliefs out of enamel-painted wood and shiny bits of metal. To a large smooth cylindrical form he will juxtapose something minute, frequently a tiny glossy ball supported by little rods or wires. From such materials one can, of course, evoke a strong esthetic reaction; and Roszak's artist-critics are, I think, correct in contending that he does not do so, for there is no apparent relation, either of shape, position, or direction, in the forms that he constructs; they are merely there and that is all. Calder will also use shiny little balls and will also set them out on wires, but through motion or merely through a calculated spatial tension he will achieve a rhythm in addition to concentration. But Roszak has not yet penetrated through the limitations of expressive means; he is only interested in the actual construction in which he is very accomplished. Thus his works would hold up very well in the company of

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mechanical objects; one can find few telegraph-poles or grandfather's clocks that exhibit a neater craftsmanship than Roszak's sculptures. It was unfortunate for him, I think, that his works were first exhibited by themselves alone. If he were to see them in large group-exhibitions, surrounded by discordant personalities, he would perhaps see that his own work was fixed into an expressive nullity, closer to the fire-extinguisher on the wall than to the rest of the exhibition. (And I am not overlooking the fact that there are many exhibitions in which the fire-extinguisher may be the most satisfying object on the wall.) Roszak has perhaps felt that some emotional overtone must be instilled into his work, and his present attempts to work it in represent to me his least successful achievements. Occasionally (in the reliefs) he will impose an external type of expression, mixing up wires and balls into a neat surrealist jumble; this invariably produces an expression of a sort (literary but not esthetic) because of its resemblance to twisted entrails or the much-enlarged diagram of an ear.

I do not wish to imply from the above that Roszak is incapable of experiencing an esthetic emotion. I feel that it is there but because of constructional preoccupation it has been impeded from coming to a focus except in one very simple relief where the tension was so extremely reticent that it was not frustrated by unfelt contrasts or haphazard wiggles of wires. Roszak has reached the stage in which Gabo and Pevsner found themselves in the early nineteen-twenties; they had mastered the technical difficulties of construction and their work resembled well-made optical or hydraulic accessories. They were then in a position to feel their way as artists and their work, without sacrificing any of its technical strength, began to break through its expressive nullity.

A Note on Fantasia

I do not share the militancy with which the enemies and admirers of Walt Disney's latest opus have been writing of his work. I foresaw many years ago that he would turn into something exactly like this. In his early animal-cartoons he created a brilliant and authentic world of his own, and (which in no way impairs their inexhaustible brilliance) one with quite natural limitations. But Disney could not resist the call to "serious art" and as such he meets the fate of the anti-cultural creator in our present-day bourgeois world. It is very significant that the artists who successfully answer the call to profound esthetic achievement are those whose understanding of the workings of art generally are broad and cultivated (Picasso, Stravinsky, T. S. Eliot). But Disney will have no traffic with culture,—it is said that he will not allow the word "art" to be mentioned in his studio. Al Smith used to boast proudly that he had never read a book; his speeches and political career show well the results. *Fantasia* has about as much quality as an Al Smith speech. Except in the brief episode in which Mickey Mouse makes Disney feel at home again, it is as vulgar and false as ye gifte shoppe culture which it represents.

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS

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What Has Become of Them?

A Check-List of European Artists, Writers and Musicians

EDITOR'S NOTE: *As the war continues, reshaping the structure of European society, scattering writers and artists throughout the world, it seems useful to try and set down the most recent available information on what has happened to the more significant representatives of European culture. In the following notes, William Petersen has summarized data obtained from the newspapers, from publishers' releases, from personal interviews and letters. Because of the nature of the subject, it is impossible to get completely reliable information: no doubt some of the data given below are already obsolete (or were never true in the first place.) Nor is completeness possible with any technique short of a WPA project: Mr. Petersen was able to learn nothing definite about such important figures as Brancusi, Miró, Cocteau, and LeCorbusier. We invite our readers to supplement and correct the information given below, and we shall be glad to print any letters we receive on the subject.*

PAINTERS

Among the artists now in Paris are: *Pablo Picasso, Henri Laurens, Georges Rouault, Marcel Duchamp, Georges Braque, César Domela,* and possibly also *Constantin Brancusi.* Until last October, Picasso was in Royan, in the unoccupied territory; he then went to Paris intending to go to Marseille and thence to Mexico. But some difficulty arose, apparently because he is a Spanish citizen, and he has not been allowed to leave occupied territory. (Another report is that friends in America urged him to come here but that he refused to desert Paris; still another states that he has been stripped of all his possessions.)

Hans Arp and his painter-wife, *Sophie Henriette Täuber-Arp,* were at their home in Meudon, near Paris, until the invasion. They are now in the south of France, hoping to come to America. *Max Ernst, André Derain,* and *André Masson* are also in unoccupied France, and Ernst is also arranging for an American visa. *Marc Chagall* is living near Avignon. *Henri-Matisse* has remained at his home in Nice. *René Magritte,* who was in Brussels when Belgium was invaded, is now in the south of France. Nothing has been heard from *Paul Delvaux,* who was also in Brussels. The sculptor, *Gonzalez,* and his son-in-law, *Hartung* are in southern France. *Vasily Kandinsky* is in Vichy.

Jean Hélion sailed from the United States in January of last year to join the French army; he is now a prisoner somewhere in Germany. *Oskar Kokoschka* is still living in London. *Ben Nicholson* and *Barbara Hepworth* are in Cornwall, as is also *Naum Gabo.* Of those in the United States, several have been here for some time—for example, *Giorgio de Chirico*

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and *Lyonnel Feininger*. *Amédée Ozenfant* is on the faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York City, where he will be joined this spring by *Gordon Onslow-Ford*. More recent arrivals include *Yves Tanguy, Piet Mondrian, Fernand Léger*.

Salvador Dali, falsely reported in a Spanish prison, is apparently on good terms with the Spanish government. When he arrived in this country in August, he was reported by the Spanish ambassador to have bought some property near his former home in Spain and otherwise to have indicated that his sympathies lie with fascism. Dali has not commented on this statement. Perhaps his autobiography, which he is now writing in Virginia, will tell us more. *View* reported, with some hesitancy and with what truth it is hard to say, that *Joan Miró* is now collaborating with the French government in its propaganda work. Other sources report him in Majorca; others in Spain.

Pierre Loeb has re-opened his Paris gallery (Galérie Pierre) with a modern exhibition. Despite signs of "Magasin Juif" on the windows it is being enthusiastically attended.

WRITERS

Many of the French poets are back in Paris. *Benjamin Péret* and *Paul Eluard* are there; the reports that they were taken prisoner are apparently without basis. *Georges Hugnet* and *Paul Valéry* are there. *Patrice de la Tour du Pin* was wounded and captured during the first weeks of the war; he is still a prisoner somewhere in Germany. *Pierre Mabille* is in Martinique and may come to the United States.

André Malraux enlisted in a French tank division at the outbreak of the war. He was wounded and taken prisoner in June and escaped late in November. At present he is safe in unoccupied France, engaged in writing a novel about the war. *Jean Giraudoux* is director of propaganda at Vichy. *Henri Bergson* died recently in Paris. *Roger Martin du Gard* is in Nice. *François Mauriac* is at his home near Bordeaux. *Romain Rolland* is still in Switzerland. *André Gide* and *André Breton* are in the south of France. *Louis Aragon*, like Malraux, served in the French tank corps, was captured, later escaped from a German prison camp. He is variously reported in Lisbon—waiting to come to this country—and in unoccupied France, writing a new novel (non-political). *Antoine de St. Exupéry* arrived here on December 30. *Jules Romains* had come some time before, as also *Henri Bernstein*, whose anti-Nazi play *Elvire* closed in Paris only on June 6. *Alexis Léger* is in this country writing his memoirs.

Boris Nikolaievsky, Paris director of the Institute of Social History and co-author of *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*, is now in Washington. *James Joyce* died on January 13, 1941, in Zurich, Switzerland, after a stomach operation. *Sigrid Undset* and *Maurice Maeterlinck* arrived in this country several months ago. *Ignazio Silone* is still in exile in Switzerland. *José Ortega y Gasset* is in Buenos Aires. In Mexico, with many others, are *Ramón Sender* and *Esteban Francés*.

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Gertrude Stein recently sent her publisher, from somewhere in unoccupied France, the manuscript of her new novel. Called *Ida,* it is modeled on the life of the Duchess of Windsor, though the Random House reader was not able to guess it from the manuscript itself. It is reported that she has since come to the United States, where she arrived incognito and lives unrecognized. According to other, more reliable, sources, she is still in the south of France or in Belgium. *Kay Boyle* wrote a letter to the October *View* from Megève, a town in Italian-occupied France, in which she said she might come to the United States. *Julian Green,* an expatriate longer than she, is now in Virginia writing a new novel. *Ezra Pound,* after spending a year in this country, has returned to Rapallo, Italy, where he is still at the last report writing cantos.

T. S. Eliot is an air-raid warden in Surrey; *John Strachey* is one in London. *Stephen Spender* is in England, where, with Cyril Connolly, he continues to edit *Horizon. Louis MacNeice,* who had been in this country for some time, was recently called back to England for military service. *Dylan Thomas* is in an anti-aircraft unit on the Channel coast. *Christopher Isherwood* is working with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in California. *W. H. Auden* has been in this country since before the war.

The Germans had already moved once and had only shallow roots in French soil; they are scattered all over the earth. In London, among others, are *Alfred Kerr,* critic; *Max Hermann-Neisse,* poet; *Karl Otten,* novelist. *Arnold Zweig* is in Palestine. *Friedrich Wolf,* author of *Professor Mamlock,* was in a camp at Vernet d'Ariège. Through the intercession of the Soviet ambassador, he was released and sent to Russia. *Bertolt Brecht* escaped from Denmark to one of the Baltic states, also with the help of Russian officials. *Alfred Neumann* is in Lisbon, on his way here. *Gustav Regler,* who was also in a French camp, is in Mexico City. *Franz Borkenau,* who had lived in England for six years, was for some months in a British camp. He has now been deported to Australia; his address is "Prisoners of War Information Bureau, Melbourne." *Hellmuth Wetzel,* a poet living in Paris, is in a German prison. *Julius Meier-Graefe* died recently at Vichy. A few months earlier, *René Schickele* had died in Paris. *Walter Hasenclever,* leftwing playwright. killed himself at the Les Milles camp. *Franz Pfemfert,* onetime editor of *Aktion,* is now with his wife in New York, Another suicide was *Carol Einstein.* Still a young man, he had helped to establish in *Bebuquin* and other works a new naturalist trend in German novels. Released from a camp near Bordeaux, he traveled with his friends, the Pfemferts, towards the Pyrenees, but at Pau threw himself into the river. The list of German writers in the United States is long: *Stefan Zweig,* now in South America on a lecture tour; *Heinrich Mann,* who arrived with *Gottfried Mann,* his nephew (Thomas' son), editor of a Zurich review; *Konrad Heiden,* author of a biography of Hitler; *Leonhard Frank; Hermann Kesten,* who is now helping at the American Rescue Committee to bring others over; *Lion Feuchtwanger; Emil Ludwig,* now in California working on a biography of Trotsky; the novelist *Anna*

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Seghers; Alfred Polgar; Alfred Döblin, author of *Alexanderplatz,* now in Hollywood; *Erich Maria Remarque,* also in Hollywood; *Franz Werfel; Adolf Hofmeider.*

MUSICIANS

Of the modern group known as *The Six,* three—*Francis Poulenc, Georges Auric,* and *Germaine Tailleferre*—are in unoccupied France; *Arthur Honegger,* a Swiss citizen, is in Switzerland; *Darius Milhaud* is in the United States. (No. 6, *Louis Durey,* is no longer active musically.) *Henri Rabaud,* another French composer, is in Mexico City. *Georges Enesco* from last reports was in his native Roumania. *Ernst von Dohnányi* is still director of the Musical Academy in Budapest; *Zoltan Kodály* is also still in Hungary. *Walter Gieseking* was in Holland in November.

Aside from these and a few others (*Richard Strauss* lives at peace with the authorities in Munich; in Finland *Sibelius* still works on his eighth and ninth symphonies), there are few of the great musicians still in Europe. They illustrate perhaps best the dimension of the cultural shift to the new world. Works once published in Vienna, Berlin, Leipzig, Mainz, Prague, Paris, London are more and more now coming out in New York. During the past year there has been an increase of some 25 percent in music published in this country. *Manuel de Falla* is in South America. *Julius Korngold,* the Viennese critic, is in America. *Oskar Straus* recently arrived here. *Franz Lehár* is still in Vienna, but preparing to come. *Benjamin Britten,* the English composer, is in America, working on an opera with an American theme, for which Auden is writing the book. *Paul Hindemith* teaches at the Yale University School of Music. *Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* is at Hollywood; *Hanns Eisler* is also there, writing the music for John Steinbeck's new film about Mexico. The Fontainebleau Music School is now an American hospital; its director, *Robert Casadesus,* teaches at Princeton. The head of the piano department, *Isidor Philipp,* is in Bordeaux on his way here; his assistant, *Nadia Boulanger,* is teaching in New England. *Darius Milhaud,* whose latest opera, *Médée,* had its premiere in Paris in June, has since written a dirge for defeated Netherlands, the *Cortège Funèbre.* Now in this country, he divides his time between conducting the Boston symphony, giving piano recitals, and teaching at Mills College, in California.

. . . . . .

Julien Duvivier, who directed *Un Carnet de Bal,* and *René Clair* are in Hollywood. *Jean Renoir,* director of *The Lower Depths,* recently arrived in this country. *Ruby Grierson,* little known in this country but admired in England as a pioneer in documentary film work, went down with the *City of Benares. . . . Miës van der Rohe,* the Dutch architect, is in Chicago. *Antonin Heythun,* the Czech architect, who had come here to build the World's Fair exhibit, never went back. The German architect, *Walter Gropius,* has been teaching at Harvard for some years.

(*Compiled by William Petersen*)

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Books

AN AMERICAN IN SPAIN

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS. By Ernest Hemingway. Scribners. $2.75.

To anyone who has been at all interested in its author's career—and who has not?—*For Whom the Bell Tolls* will first give a literary emotion, for here, we feel at once, is a restored Hemingway writing to the top of his bent. He does not, as in the period of *To Have and Have Not* and *The Fifth Column*, warp or impede his notable talent with the belief that art is to be used like the automatic rifle. He does not substitute political will for literary insight nor arrogantly pass off his personal rage as social responsibility. Not that his present political attitude is coherent or illuminating; indeed, it is so little of either that it acts as the anarchic element in a work whose total effect is less impressive than many of its parts. Yet at least it is flexible enough, or ambiguous enough, to allow Hemingway a more varied notion of life than he has ever before achieved.

With the themes that bring out his skills most happily Hemingway has never been so good—no one else can make so memorable the events of sensory experience, how things look and move and are related to each other. From the beginning of the novel to the end one has the happy sense of the author's unremitting and successful poetic effort. So great is this effort, indeed, that one is inclined to feel that it is at time even too great, that it becomes conscious of itself almost to priggishness and quite to virtuosity. About some of the very good things—they are by now famous—one has the uneasy sense that they are rather too obviously "performances": I mean things so admirable as the account of the massacre of the fascists by the republicans as well as things so much less good because so frankly gaudy as the description of the "smell of death." The really superlative passages are more modestly handled and the episodes of El Sordo on his hill and Andres making his way through the republican lines are equal to Tolstoy in his best battle-manner. But the sense of the writer doing his duty up to and beyond the point of supererogation is forced on us again in the frequent occurrence of that kind of writing of which Hemingway has always allowed himself a small and forgivable amount to deal with emotions which he considers especially difficult, delicate or noble. Obtrusively "literary" and oddly "feminine," it is usually used for the emotions of love and it is always in as false and fancy taste as this:

> Now as they lay all that before had been shielded was unshielded. Where there had been roughness of fabric all was smooth with a smoothness and firm rounded pressing and a long warm coolness, cool outside and warm within, long and light and closely holding, closely held, lonely, hollow-making with contours, happy-making, young and loving and now all warmly smooth with a hollowing, chest-aching,

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> tight-held loneliness that was such that Robert Jordan felt he could not stand it. . . .

Yet the virtuosity and the lapses of taste are but excesses of an effort which is, as a whole, remarkably successful. And if we cannot help thinking a little wryly about how much tragic defeat, how much limitation of political hope was necessary before Hemingway could be weaned from the novel of arrogant political will, neither can we help being impressed by what he has accomplished in the change.

I speak first and at some length of the style of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* because it seems to me that the power and charm of the book arise almost entirely from the success of the style—from the success of many incidents handled to the full of their possible esthetic interest. The power and charm do not arise from the plan of the book as a whole; when the reading is behind us what we remember is a series of brilliant scenes and a sense of having been almost constantly excited, but we do not remember a general significance. Yet Hemingway, we may be sure, intended that the star-crossed love and heroic death of Robert Jordan should be a real tragedy, a moral and political tragedy which should suggest and embody the tragedy of the Spanish war. In this intention he quite fails; he gives us astonishing melodrama, which is something, but he does not give us tragedy. The clue to the failure is the essential, inner dulness of the hero, for Jordan is dull because he does not have within himself the tensions which, in historical fact, the events he lives through actually did have. Because Jordan does not reproduce in himself the moral and political tensions which existed in the historical situation, his story is at best cinematic; and since his story must provide whatever architectonic the novel is to have, the novel itself fails, not absolutely but relatively to its possibility and implied intention.

This failure illustrates as well as anything could the point of Philip Rahv's essay, "The Cult of Experience in American Writing" (*Partisan Review*, November-December 1940). For here again we have the imbalance which Mr. Rahv speaks of as characteristic of the American novel, on the one hand the remarkable perception of sensory and emotional fact, on the other hand an inadequacy of intellectual vitality. Consider as an illuminating detail the relation which Hemingway establishes between Robert Jordan and the leaders he admires, Goltz the general and Karkov the journalist. Both are cynical and exceptionally competent men, wholly capable of understanding all the meanings of the revolutionary scene. But they are Europeans and Robert Jordan is not; like the hero of Henry James's novel, *The American*, he knows that there are machinations going on around him, very wrong but very wonderful, which he will never be able to understand. Nor does he really want to understand as his friends do; he wants, as he says, to keep his mind in suspension until the war is won. He wants only to feel emotions and ideals, or, as a technician and a brave man, to *do* what he is told; the thinking is for others. Yet, like a Henry James character again, he must penetrate the complex secret; but

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he has no wish to use it, only to "experience" it, for he likes, as he says, the feeling of being an "insider," which is what one becomes by losing one's American "chastity of mind" telling political lies with the Russians in Gaylord's Hotel.

Hemingway himself, then, is wholly aware of the moral and political tensions which existed in actual fact. Again and again, and always pungently, he brings to our notice the contradictions of a revolutionary civil war—describes the cynicism and intrigue and shabby vice of the Russian politicos, pointedly questions the political virtue of La Pasionaria, paints André Marty, in a brilliant and terrifying scene, as a homicidal psychopath under the protection of the Comintern, speaks out about the sins of Loyalist leaders and has only a small and uncertain inclination to extenuate the special sins of the Communists. Indeed, there is scarcely a charge that anti-Stalinists might have made during the war whose truth Hemingway does not in one way or another avow. Yet by some failure of mind or of seriousness, he cannot permit these political facts to become integral with the book by entering importantly into the mind of the hero. Robert Jordan, to be sure, thinks a good deal about all these things but almost always as if they were not much more than—to use the phrase of another anti-fascist—a matter of taste. He can, in Mr. Rahv's use of the word, "experience" all the badness, but he cannot deal with it, dare not judge it.

In the end it kills him. And Hemingway knows, of course, that it kills him, for it is certainly true that of all the things that prevent Robert Jordan's despatch from arriving in time to halt the ill-fated attack and preserve his own life, it is the atmosphere of Gaylord's Hotel that is ultimately culpable; it is Marty's protected madness that makes it finally impossible to cancel the attack and that seals Jordan's fate. Were this kept in focus we should have had a personal tragedy which would have truly represented the whole tragedy of the Spanish war—the tragedy, that is, which was not merely a defeat by superior force but also a moral and political failure; for tragedy is not a matter of fact, it is a matter of value. To Robert Jordan his own death is bitter enough, but it is only the last incident of his experience; of its inherent tragic meaning, of its significance in relation to its cause, he has no awareness. Nor is his lack of awareness an intentional irony of which the reader is to be conscious; Hemingway lets the significance fade and the event becomes very nearly a matter of accident. It is, I find, rather terrifying to see where writing from naked experience can take an author; Hemingway knows that his hero must die in *some* moral circumstance and he lamely and belatedly contrives for Robert Jordan a problem of—courage. And so we get what we all like in the movies, a good fighting death, but in the face of all the potential significance of the event it is devastatingly meaningless. Courage, we are told as a last word, is all: and every nerve responds to the farewell, the flying hooves, the pain and the pathos, but we have been shuffled quite

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away from tragedy, which is not of fact and the nerves but of judgment and the mind.

What is the major movement of the novel is, then, a failure and a failure the more to be regretted because it has so many of the elements of great success. But there is another movement of the novel which does not fail—I mean all that part which deals with the guerilla bands of the mountains. One has to understand the genre of this to understand its success; one has to see that this part of the story is a social romance. I should like to draw on Mr. Rahv again: he remarks in another of his essays ("Paleface and Redskin," *Kenyon Review*, Summer 1939) that Hemingway may well be understood as a descendant of Natty Bumppo; certainly in each of Hemingway's heroes there is a great deal of the Leatherstocking blood, though "crossed" (as Leatherstocking himself would say) with the gentler, more sensitive blood of Uncas. And as Leatherstocking-Uncas, the perfect scout, Robert Jordan is all decision, action and good perception, far more interesting and attractive than in his character of looker-on at the political feasts of the Russians where he is a kind of Parsifal, the culpable innocent who will not ask the right question. But more than the character of its hero takes its rise from Cooper—more, too, than Hemingway's "sense of terrain" which Edmund Wilson speaks of as being like Cooper's; for when we think of how clear a line there is between Uncas, Chingachgook and Tamenund, the noble Indians, and El Sordo and Anselmo and the rest of the guerilla band we see how very like Cooper's is Hemingway's romantic sense of the social and personal virtues. With Cooper, however, the social idealization is more formal and more frankly "mythical" and perhaps it is Hemingway's greater realism which makes his social romance suspect, if not as fact then as feeling. For in a love affair with a nation, a people or a class, such as between Kipling and the sahibs or—to speak of a minor but socially interesting writer of today—between Angela Thirkell and the English upper middle class, there is pretty sure to appear, sooner or later, a hatred of the outlander. Even when, like Hemingway, the lover is not himself a member of the beloved group, one cannot help sensing the implied rejection of the rest of humanity.

There is something suspect, too, I feel, in the love-story of this novel, which has so stirred and charmed the reviewers. By now the relation between men and women in Hemingway's novels has fixed itself into a rather dull convention in which the men are all dominance and knowledge, the women all essential innocence and responsive passion; these relationships reach their full development almost at the moment of first meeting and are somehow completed as soon as begun. Most significant, one feels of love in the Hemingway novels that it exists at all only because circumstances so surely doom it. We do not have to venture very deep into unexpressed meanings to find a connection between Hemingway's social myth and the pattern of his love-stories; in both there is a desperation which makes a quick grab for simple perfection, a desperation which, at the

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same time, makes understandable the compulsive turning to courage as the saving and solving virtue. The whole complex of attitudes is, we might guess, a way of responding to the idea of death.

About Hemingway's concern with death I do not find myself in agreement with the many critics who have found it irritating that anyone should deal with death except as a simple physical fact. I am not sure that our liberal, positive, progressive attitudes have taught us to be emotionally more competent before the idea of death, but only more silent; I cannot assume that anyone who breaks our habit of silence is, by that, doing wrong. But in Hemingway's treatment of death there is something indirect and thwarted, as though he cannot entirely break through our cultural reticences to speculate and poetize creatively upon the theme, as could, say a death-haunted man like John Donne, from whom Hemingway takes the epigraph and title of his novel. For Donne, death is the appalling negation and therefore the teacher of the ego, whereas for Hemingway it is the ego's final expression and the perfect protector of the personality. The great power of mind in Donne saved him from this sentimental error, just as it taught him how little the ego can exist by itself, how "no man is an *Ilande* intire of itselfe." The nature and power of Hemingway's mind are such that he cannot exemplify in art the idea of the community of men, however moving and important it seems to him; he is wholly at the service of the cult of experience and the result is a novel which, undertaking to celebrate the community of men, actually glorifies the isolation of the individual ego.

LIONEL TRILLING

THE DOUBLE AGENTS: PROVOCATEUR

THE EXPENSE OF GREATNESS. By R. P. Blackmur. Arrow Editions. $3.00.

The hospitable reception of this book by *The Nation* and *The New Republic*, the failure of the latter journal to include it in its list of the one hundred best of the year, will doubtless provide material for a ten-minute research paper to be read in 1980 by a graduate student at the annual meeting of the M.L.A. The paper will be called "The Case of R. P. Blackmur; or, The Omniscience of Bogan and Levin." Readers of *Partisan* will know what this is all about: I do not propose here to describe the range and substance of Miss Bogan's and Mr. Levin's respective omnisciences. They do not themselves offer it in their reviews; it is, in one of Blackmur's own phrases, in the state of "unnourished abstraction." The rage exceeds the visible motivation for it. I do not say that these reviewers have not seen good reason for what I consider unfair—to themselves no less than to their subject—representations of the quality of Mr. Blackmur's criticism. But they have not given the public the full evidence that ought to accompany any literary attack.

Perhaps they have it. I have some of it myself, perhaps as much as

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Miss Bogan and Mr. Levin have produced; but I read it differently. The case comes in the end to the simple charge that Blackmur writes badly. He uses an undigested philosophical vocabulary; he elaborates distinctions beyond necessity. These are vices that I think no reader will deny him. I do not know whether they represent defects of perception or of his peculiar situation as a writer. There is at any rate a stylistic mannerism that frequently puts a barrier of personality between the reader and the substance of what Blackmur is saying.

What about Blackmur's "philosophy"? It is amateurish; it is eclectic; it is undigested. There is Santayana in the background, but I do not see very much of Santayana's Platonism in the foreground. There are phrases from Santayana which are used to illuminate a particular point, but they have only the look of "philosophy"; and they invite the just charge of esotericism brought by John Crowe Ransom. Now the multiplication of distinctions beyond necessity: I do not see very much of that kind of preciosity in this book. It is everywhere in *The Double Agent.* For example, the entire essay on Hart Crane proceeds from a single distinction elaborated into a verbalism that is made to replace Crane's poetry.

I do not take very seriously Mr. Blackmur's philosophizing. (A similar weakness in Eliot has been pounced upon by Yvor Winters, in the current *The Kenyon Review,* who uses it—along with distorted quotations —to argue with a kind of seriousness that only Mr. Winters possesses, that Eliot is virtually a blockhead.) Mr. Blackmur's verbalisms are a genuine defect, but they are the defect of a critical power unique in our time and, I think, of unique value. He is the best reader of poetic texts in the United States; and I am at a loss to explain why Miss Bogan (one of the best poets in the United States) failed to see this, unless like most poets she would rather have poetry admired or abused than read. Mr. Levin goes into this matter: "Often when you expect a comment to explain a quotation, you find that you must go back to the quotation to find an explanation for his comment." Exactly; and what greater tribute could Mr. Levin or anybody else pay to a critic? Mr. Blackmur, more than any other critic today, is governed by the poet's text. (With all his crankiness he has never written as bad a sentence as the one I have quoted from Mr. Levin.) Here is a passage from the essay on Melville. It is labored, but is there anything remarkable about it except its just observation upon Melville's average achievement in prose?

> This is the bottom level of good writing, whether in prose or verse; and a style which was able to maintain the qualities of accurate objective feeling which it exemplifies at other levels and for other purposes could not help being a great style.

I shall not cite Mr. Levin's grosser vulgarities. This is his statement of Mr. Blackmur's critical procedure: "The artist is supposed to make a pageant of his shattered sensibilities, and the critic's job is to pick up the pieces—*disjecti membra poetae.*" The fake Latin sets the tone of the most disgracefully rigged statement of a writer's position I have ever seen. Let

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Mr. Blackmur speak for himself:

> We have, to import a dichotomy which T. S. Eliot made for his own work, the prose writings discovering and buttressing the ideal, and we have the poems which express as much as can be *actualized* [italics mine] . . . of what the prose discovered or envisaged.

That is the problem with which Mr. Blackmur is constantly engaged: what has the poet been able to make *actual*, in terms of the poem itself? What is formed and understood?

Is that not the specific task of literary criticism? It is Mr. Blackmur's distinction to have undertaken the final and most difficult problem that confronts the literary critic. Neither he nor any one else can solve it, but I think we must agree with Miss Bogan that he is grappling with it. As for Mr. Levin, here is one of Coleridge's reflections on the reviewers of his time:

> I know nothing that surpasses the vileness of deciding on the merits of a poet or painter,—not by characteristic defects; for where there is genius, these always point to his characteristic beauties; but—by accidental failures or faulty passages; except the impudence of defending it, as the proper duty, and most instructive part of criticism.

I suppose Mr. Levin would defend it. We do not need to find genius in Mr. Blackmur to be enlightened by this description of Mr. Levin.

ALLEN TATE

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED

REASON, SOCIAL MYTHS, AND DEMOCRACY. By Sidney Hook. John Day. $3.00.

In *Reason, Social Myths and Democracy* Sidney Hook applies reason and acute critical intelligence to a number of social philosophies which he regards as "inadequate" and containing an element of "myth." Unfortunately he does not subject democracy to the same persistent and exacting critical examination as he does the other matters he has chosen. The book is made up of the author's reviews and critical articles of the last few years. They range from the somewhat trivial and nagging as in the case of a review of Max Lerner's *Ideas Are Weapons* (due perhaps to the insubstantiality of the original subject), to the brilliant and illuminating analyses of Jacques Maritain and Thurman Arnold, which last is, of its kind, a masterpiece. The bulk of the book is concerned with Marxism; even the studies of the other figures derive some of their fruitfulness from the fact that they apply the Marxist method of critique of an ideology in terms of the analysis of the real social programs and interests behind the ideological phrases. Hook's chief intellectual pleasure in this work takes the form of employing the same method in the critical examination of the

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Marxist or self-styled Marxist movements themselves. Certainly the device is legitimate, and were it not for Dr. Hook's changing mood in the matter of war, he might profitably have applied it to the study of democracy also.

The critique of Stalin and Stalinism contained in the work need not be dwelt upon here, since the author's views in this field are fairly well known. Trotsky is subjected to a rigorous and yet personally friendly analysis. There is an attempt to indicate which evils would have persisted in Russia had Trotsky won instead of Stalin, and which evils of Stalinism he would have prevented. It is interesting to note that the book itself is dedicated "*To the memory of a Great Adversary*"—whom I take to be the recently murdered revolutionary leader.

To Lenin, however, Dr. Hook is less than fair. There may be a certain poetic justice but there is little of any other sort, in using on Lenin his own polemical trick of declaring that "a political leader is not only responsible for the way he leads but also for what is done by those he leads." We wonder how Professor Hook would like to be held responsible for all those he has taught and all they do ever afterward! Yet from this unsound dictum of Lenin's, Hook deduces that "Lenin's responsibility for Stalin is *absolute*." That he should ignore Lenin's disavowal of Stalin, that he should use such an unHookian word as "absolute," and that he should have made no real attempt to determine which elements of Stalinism are directly derivable, which involve enlargements so great as to result (if Hook will pardon the dialectics) in the emergence of a new quality, and which have no roots in Lenin's doctrine at all—these lacks reveal the author's animus towards the founder of Russian Bolshevism.

There is an admirable critique of the Russian revolution in terms of the widening gap between promise and performance, between socialist ideals and Stalinist realities. It suffers, however, from two defects which somewhat weaken it. The first is the failure to consider what role was played by Russia's own past history, traditions, economic and cultural state, in shaping or misshaping the Russian revolution. The second is an almost unconscious—at any rate an inadequately examined—acceptance of the viewpoint of Russian Menshevism and the Second International. "The Bolsheviks," Hook properly reminds us, "did not overthrow Tsarism but the bourgeois democracy of Kerensky, and . . . after the suppression of the Kornilov revolt the danger of a Tsarist restoration was extremely remote." Hook seems to have forgotten here that aspect of the Russian revolution which first enlisted his sympathy, namely, its attempt to put an end to the World War. The Bolsheviks overthrew Kerensky originally not out of opposition to his "bourgeois democracy" but to his insistence on continuing the war. He seems to have forgotten, too, the opposition of the Kerensky government to any attempt to disarm the Tsarist military machine and reform it—Kornilov was only one of many who were contemplating military coups—and the further opposition on the part of the Kerensky government to an immediate breakup of the great landed estates, a measure which alone seemed to guarantee Russia against the danger of restoration.

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The suppression of Kornilov was no greater guarantee against subsequent reaction than was the suppression of the Kapp *putsch* in Germany, where the road back led through Ebert to Hindenburg to Hitler. Despite his insistence on critical and empirical analyses, Hook has made little effort in this work to examine the lessons of Austria (where there was not even a Communist Party to complicate matters), of Italy and Spain, nor in general any experiences of the post-war revolutions and counter-revolutions.

The most important sections of the work under review deal with the philosophy and sociology of Marxism. They continue the task undertaken in his *Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx*, modifying and supplementing the earlier work in terms of the experiences of the recent past and Hook's own changing moods and attitudes. As in the earlier book, there is an underestimation of the economic side of Marxism, due in part to evident incomprehension. He dismisses in a single phrase "the metaphysics of its value theory." This is not the place to explain or defend that theory. We can only note that his failure to appreciate it impoverishes Hook's understanding of Marx's critique of capitalist economy, which he nevertheless approves. Moreover, no rival theory of value, and no economics without a value theory, has gotten far in revealing the trends of capitalist economic development or the nature of the capitalist crisis.

Once more Dr. Hook engages in a quarrel with the theory of "inevitability" of socialism, taking it literally and making rather too much of it. Actually, in the thought of Marx it is little more than "an optimism of progress," an affirmative belief in man's desire to survive on the planet, and in his ability to conquer nature and apply intelligence to social organization. It is a "belief" on the basis of which to act, and not a substitute for action. Its flavor can be brought out by comparing it to the slogan, "There will always be England." Who would now undertake to tell those who act on that faith that the word "always" implies an "absolute" and that all existence is "contingent"? Despite its verbal form when taken too logistically, is it not rather a stimulus to the planning and waging of the struggle for England's existence? Marx's writings and Marx's life alike are evidence that such is his manner of understanding "inevitability," however some professed Marxists may have understood it.

As in the earlier work there is a comparison between Marx and Dewey, but Marx's stock has dropped somewhat and Dewey's risen correspondingly, and there are other changes in terms which shed interesting light on changes in Hook's own views. "As to the fundamental agreement between Marx and Dewey," Hook wrote in 1935, "I need only to point to their common left-Hegelian derivation and naturalization of the Hegelian dialectic, common criticism of atomism, sensationalism, Platonism and formalism, and a common wholehearted acceptance of the philosophical implications of Darwinism." Now there is discreet silence on this common left-Hegelian derivation and common naturalization of the dialectic, for Hook has declared war on dialectics and gives free rein to his always smoldering hostility to Marx's evil genius, Frederick Engels. And there is

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an implication now that whatever was positive in Marx has been developed further by Dewey and that a future socialist movement in America will have to look to the latter rather than the former for its chief nourishment. Dewey is undoubtedly a socially minded philosopher and thinker of the first magnitude but it is faintly comic to think of him as tribune of the people, Promethean bringer of the torch of thought to the masses, or adequate guide through the storms of civil war or the labyrinthine maze of capitalist economic life. An indigenous socialist movement, however greatly it will profit from an absorption and popularization of Dewey's teachings, will still have to go direct to Marx for innumerable positive things which the American philosopher did not "elaborate beyond anything found in Marx," and other things which are not found in Dewey at all.

Were it not for limitation of space we might make still other reservations on Hook's study of "What is living and what is dead in Marxism." But it is necessary to emphasize that the book as a whole is a most valuable and illuminating contribution to the study and interpretation of Marxism, and not merely in its valid negative criticisms based upon the bitter experiences of the Russian revolution. There is a warm defense of Marx's rationalism at a time when rationalism of any kind is in need of defending; a demonstration of Marx's essential respect for the achievements of political and cultural democracy which is properly linked up with his desire to extend rather than supersede those conquests by rooting them in economic democracy; a sympathetic and enlightening analysis of Marx's humanism; an acknowledgment, occasionally quarrelsome and grudging, of Marxism as "the tradition of scientific criticism of all social dreams" and as "a program of scientific activity in behalf of socialist ideals." Hook's conclusion on the present crisis of Marxism is that it is "in the main due to the failure of men" rather than principles, "a colossal moral failure—a failure of intelligence and courage." He is convinced that it can be "rearmed with deeper moral and psychological insights . . . and fortified by the lessons of experience" and can thereby still serve as a promising philosophy. One condition for its intellectual rearming, in Hook's opinion, is the complete scrapping of the "dialectic." With much of his interesting critique on that score I am in agreement, but to indicate where I differ and to follow him through this section of his book would require another article.

BERTRAM D. WOLFE

THE RENAISSANCE OF THE LITTLE MAG

Accent, a quarterly; Box 102, University Station, Urbana, Illinois; $1.00 for a year, 30 cents a copy; edited by Kerker Quinn and others.

Diogenes, a bi-monthly; Box 2035, Madison, Wisconsin; $1.00 a year, 20 cents a copy; edited by Arthur Blair and Frank Jones.

Experimental Review; editor: Robert Symmes, Woodstock, N. Y.; subscription for four issues $1.00; 35 cents a copy.

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Vice Versa, a bi-monthly; P. O. Box 583, Grand Central Annex, New York City; 50 cents a year, 10 cents a copy; edited by Harry Brown and Dunstan Thompson.

View, a monthly; Box 58, Station O, New York City; $1.00 a year, 10 cents a copy; edited by Charles Henri Ford.

THERE IS A REVIVAL under way, it seems, in avant-garde writing in this country. The past fall has seen a burgeoning of little magazines such as has not been in many a year. *New Directions,* the principal bound organ of advanced writing in America, announces a crowd of new names for its 1940 issue. The shades of the Twenties are abroad, returned to daylight for the first time since politics took over. There are other signs. One can suggest various factors that account for all this: the collapse of the intellectual authority of Stalinism, which in the past six or seven years smothered more embers than it fanned; the relative exhaustion at this moment of "accepted" writing; the influx of writers and artists from Europe; with that, the realization that this country is the only important place left where it is still possible to pursue culture without the too immediate interference of events. In other words, we are on the spot. If writing as creative activity is not to disappear, it is up to us. How much time is left? And how shall we make the most of it? The answer to the first question depends on the world, the answer to the second on ourselves.

Let us hope meanwhile that there will not be too much repetition of the old attitudes, the old affectations, the old stunts. Not because the new is valuable just because it is new, but because the old, the conventionalized attitudes of the avant-garde are bankrupt—and the situation has changed. One picks up the new magazines in hopes of hearing goodbye said to a good many of the conventions of Experiment, with all the rites, ignorance, enfants terribles and boredom that went with them. . . .

View, of which three numbers have already appeared, is a tabloid-sized "poets' paper" put out by a group of American surrealists in New York. From it we gather that the surrealists are unwilling to say goodbye to anything. And that the American species identifies literature and art with its social life, and that this social life is complicated and satisfying. The gossip is good if you know the names; if you know the people I imagine it might get to be a little too much. Sometimes it is even a little too much for plain strangers. In the second number a letter from France is quoted, written by a person whose name the editor wisely suppresses, and who seems to have read Gertrude Stein and the great French novelists, in which the following is no less than said: "Nantes was too lovely—the Balzac period stopped and Stendhal began. There were all the refugees in big carts pulled by 8 horses or oxen, millions, no one ever saw such a thing as a whole population in migration since the time of the Merovingian kings. After was (*sic*) the 9th army coming back, it was the end of the battle of Waterloo in the Rouge et le Noir.* Nantes was bombarded quite

*The battle of Waterloo is described in *La Chartreuse de Parme.*

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a lot every day but not much got broken but in the end quite a lot of people had been killed." I am for the extinction of the milieu which has produced this creature.

To go from the putrescent to the pubescent (the last in no derogatory sense), *Diogenes*, published in a good-looking cover from Madison, Wisconsin, is earnest and ambitious, and proposes to devote a good deal of attention to contemporary foreign literature. It promises one new writer, Frank Jones, whose article on Bert Brecht in the initial (October-November) number is first-rate, being positive and passionate. I also recommend the same writer's translation of Brecht's poem "Vanished Glory of New York the Giant City." The poetry which fills most of the remainder of the magazine is somewhat thin, the usual little magazine verse, with a mixture of old and new names—but it's the only stuff from which our hope can come, and it has to be published. There is nothing else.

Bigger names feature the first number (November-December) of *Vice Versa*, published in New York. The magazine has a rather English orientation, borne out by its *New Verse* format. Its program is poetry, and it does provide us with a good poem in rhymed Fearingese by M. D. Tarantula, a superb translation by Clark Mills of a French poem by Ivan Goll, and a pretty good discursive poem by Auden, which suffers from that common malady of modern poetry, a bad last line. A longish poem by George Barker is filled with the too easy and mechanical vigor of the latest rhetoric about the latest events, but at that it is well done. Most of the newcomers are still tuning their instruments, yet manage to maintain a fairly high standard. There is a very competent and mature review of MacNeice's and Empson's latest books by Dunstan Thompson. However, what I like particularly about *Vice Versa* is the editorials and comment of Harry Brown, who writes with force, impudence and wit. Apparently, he is out to get himself widely disliked. More power to him. But I would prefer a little more positive emphasis to his violence.

The tendency of *Experimental Review*, published out of Woodstock, N. Y., is domestic goods exported to Paris for manipulation and thence re-imported. There is a flavor of cult, and there are saints, living and dead: D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Henry Miller, Anais Nin, Kenneth Patchen, and the editor's private saint, St. John Perse. There is a definite, if only negative, direction—negative because it is direction away from rather than towards something; away from the lighted world of distinctions and ordered relations the acolytes go, to spread out and scatter off in different directions into the vast regions of what is not. Unfortunately most are not enough acquainted with what is to be able to determine what is not. The enormous universe of the nether, sub- and unconscious turns out to be rather shabby and provincial for all its glitter moderne, something like California, a refuge for those who have just enough culture to be tired of it. Most of the writing in the second (November) number of *Experimental Review*—I missed the first—is *Schwärmerei*, fake surrealism, *transition* bunk, which a psychiatrist would return to his patients for revision. How-

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ever, there is a pleasant surprise. One new poet, Sanders Russell, shows a great deal of promise in a set of twelve poems which exhibit a quite original feeling for the pictorial possibilities of language. Virtues shine brightly through a screen of not too serious blemishes. If he is not domesticated by his environment, Russell ought to come to something.

Accent comes in a subdued cover from Urbana, Illinois, and presents as a professedly unique feature, an evenly balanced assortment of poems, short stories and critical articles. Its "unbiased" editorial policy belies its name, placing accent upon nothing in particular and asking to be nothing more than a grab bag of good reading. A lot of the names are familiar; two of them, Jerome Weidman and Meyer Levin, come under the heading of definitely safe writers, and I think we can consider Otis Ferguson, Selden Rodman, Richard Aldington and William March as almost equally safe. The poetry is good enough, but is also safe and familiar. There are fine poems by Wallace Stevens and August Derleth; I must however protest against those well-trimmed facades of language, which are the poems of Marya Zaturenska. The short stories by Weidman, Levin and March are pieces of competent triviality, dressed-up gags, which should have no place in a little magazine. And the critical articles and book reviews are either banal or amateurish, or both. As a whole the magazine is unexciting and unambitious. It leaves the reader with a strong thirst for a good refreshing dose of bias. . . .

Nowhere better than in these little magazines is borne out the point about the estrangement of American writers from ideas which Philip Rahv made in his article "The Cult of Experience" in the last number of *Partisan Review*. For the chief difficulty of little magazines in this country is, after money, ideas. The lack of both. The latest crop have no other program than, at best, the wish to experiment and an abstract notion of quality. The want of intellectual adventurousness, the narrowness and the ingrown and exclusive preoccupation with literature are in their way appalling. There are the usual asseverations of non-partisanship, political and otherwise; the only side taken is that of quality. And as usual the editors will probably wait around, wringing their hands, for the good stuff to come through. And meanwhile there will be nothing to fall back upon except the old habits, the old hacks (are there, or are there not, little magazine hacks?) and the old anemia.

Let us assume that the good writing wanted is the good writing of the future and not that of the past. It cannot be found by a blind search. Good writing does not grow like flowers in the fields, which need only a receptacle in order to become fruit, which awaits only a magazine with high standards and an open-minded policy, to come drifting in on the first wind. The editors of the little magazines don't believe this entirely themselves, for they talk about *stirring up* good writing. The function of a little magazine is to be an agent. In order to act as an agent and stir up good writing there must be some kind of positive notion, some working hypothesis, a bias in a particular direction, even a prejudice, as to what

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this good writing of the future will be like. As Kant says, you only find what you look for. I don't mean by this that it is necessary to be dogmatic and to have fixed ideas against which everything is to be measured. I mean simply that more thinking and inquiring should be done about the problem. And if the thinking is serious and bold enough, I am sure that important, exciting and germinative ideas will be turned up. Frank Jones' article in *Diogenes* is an example of what should be done; because it affirms the desirability of a certain kind of writing and presents in positive terms the work of a writer who exemplifies that kind of writing.

And if enough thinking and inquiring and speculating is done I am sure that it will be found that the question cannot be solved in exclusively literary terms. What I am leading up to, to put it bluntly, is a call for a return to politics—not the politics of a particular party or faction, but thinking about politics. The revulsion against politics has been too extreme and at the same time, so to speak, defective. There has been a turning away from it, but not from the kind of emotion and the kind of literature politics helped produce. The pathos of Stalinism has been remembered, but hardly any of the ideas connected with the revolution. This pathos persists because politics in some form or other cannot be eliminated today. All important questions become political questions in a much more immediate sense than in the past. The world is that way now. . . . So much of the latest poetry, for example, is alike in that it strives to reach the same tone, one of public portent. And public portent is political portent.

But to be publicly portentous one must have opinions. Even Jeremiah had opinions. He not only predicted and anticipated doom and its emotions, but he also saw the logic of doom, its reason and sense, such as he could or would; i.e. he had opinions about doom. And to have serious opinions one must have ideas—political ideas. But one is afraid of political opinions; they involve you in partisanship and in arguments that have nothing to do with poetry. One is for culture, for everything that's good, but one does not have political opinions.

I have neither the desire nor the capacity to lecture, and there are no prescriptions for good poetry. It is always hard to write, even under Queen Elizabeth. And it is not demanded that political ideas be or not be "injected" into contemporary poetry. Demands upon poetry are silly when they are made too specific. But since so many young poets (and I am thinking about those in *Vice Versa* particularly) cannot tear themselves away from history, its present disasters, since they are always hearing the clock strike twelve, fists against the door, rifles firing in the next valley, since they insist on wondering about what's going to happen to us all, they can be asked to try to understand history as well as they are able. If they do this they will have ideas, and if they have ideas they will have programs, and if they have programs they will take sides. And as for their poetry—it will need less than now to be journalistic and modish in order to be pertinent.

CLEMENT GREENBERG

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Letters

P. R. — A BALANCE SHEET

Sirs:

I am glad you are not changing your name. Even though the present name is not perfect, it has come to mean what the magazine is, and the name *The Forties* suggests nothing yet.

The trouble with the present name is, partisan of what? There is an inconsistency between the literary and art sides of the magazine, and rather a lack of connection between these and the political side. The political side, which I like best, expresses Macdonald, the art, Morris, and the literary, though less homogeneous in point of view, seems to be dominated by Rahv's "Cult of Experience." I always like Farrell's column. You have printed two excellent stories by to me hitherto unknown writers, "Drum Truck Came," and "The Mean, the Maximum, and the Minimum." Otherwise you play too safe, and print Cult of Experience stuff like the case history stories of C. R. Jackson and James Ross, or you print big names. I wish you were more receptive to unusual, even crazy, writing. I wish you were more experimental.

Your art criticism is sectarian and academic. Morris fights the rigidity and narrowness of Official Art with a more breathless rigidity and a more snobbish narrowness than any that he opposes. He almost never writes about an artist directly, nor does he analyze the quality of any work. He seems to say of an artist that he admires, that he conforms to the canons of taste of his group, but what these standards are is not told. He likes Brancusi, so he gossips about where Brancusi spent the summer. It is as if the Art comments were a news sheet for the initiated. He doesn't like someone else, so he shows that he is not in the Vanguard. (Not a member of Our Club.) His comments remind me of a fashion column in *Harpers Bazaar*. I have no sense of his using his eyes before a picture, rather he judges on the basis of talk about it. His criticism of Georgia O'Keeffe, which may be justified, is however perhaps even more applicable, for a person who simply looks at pictures, to his friend Hélion. Hélion and O'Keeffe have different lines of talk, one is therefore avantgarde and the other commercial. I know what the paintings have not got that Morris admires. But what have they positively, what is their quality? If Morris does not say this, he does not make a beginning even of his criticism.

Between the art and literature in PARTISAN REVIEW there is the conflict between the ideas of Farrell and of Morris, at opposite extremes. Greenberg's recent articles seemed to rationalize the points of view in PARTISAN REVIEW. He seems to say in "Toward a Newer Laocoon" that History justifies the latest fashion. He confuses the arts of painting and history instead of the arts of painting and fiction. I would say that art exists not for history or for fashion, but for men. Perhaps the unifying attitude of the magazine is that everything exists for History's sake.

I like the literary criticism, especially Rahv. But there is something professorial about your literary criticism, which I do not like. It is as if you sometimes thought that literature were not made for enjoyment, but so that critics can classify it. If there were a consistency betwen your art and literary contributions and criticism, Morris would prefer impressionism, or your literary critics something like Gertrude Stein, and you would exclude Farrell and Dos Passos.

I find no unifying principle in the magazine, only ideological attempts at it. Actually the magazine has a sectarian unity, the editors and their political friends, and in addition a snobbishness in favor of big names. The only thing in common between a poem by T. S. Eliot, a story by Gertrude Stein, and a third rate article by Trotsky, is the fame of the authors. But I like just this lack of unity in PARTISAN REVIEW. I enjoy PARTISAN REVIEW most when you are least partisan, and I like it least when it is most systematic, when it is united, when it is academic or sectarian. And most of the time I enjoy PARTISAN REVIEW.

Yours sincerely,

FAIRFIELD PORTER

Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y.

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—PARTISAN REVIEW *is entering on its fourth year. This seems a good point at which to take stock of the magazine, its strong points and weaknesses, and its general direction (or drift?). Mr. Porter's letter is welcome for its candor and its discrimination. Such comments—whether one 'agrees' with them or not—are useful to editors and, we hope, interesting to readers. We urge other* PARTISAN REVIEW *readers to tell us what they think of the magazine in general.*—THE EDITORS.

A NOTE FROM MR. LEWISOHN

Sirs:

I've just read with pleasure Philip Rahv's article on American writing in the PARTISAN REVIEW. It is acute and correct and therefore important. He says toward the end that few or no American works satisfy by "their quality of belief or interpretative range." That is precisely what my novels do or try to do; they have attained something like world-fame on that account. They have been largely "repressed" by the few American critics that exist. Why? Very occasionally—*sine ira aut studio*—I throw out this question. No, I don't mean *The Island Within*. I mean the books of my creative maturity: *The Last Days of Shylock, The Golden Vase, This People, Trumpet of Jubilee* (especially that!), *For Ever Wilt Thou Love.*

Sincerely,
LUDWIG LEWISOHN

New York, N. Y.

A READER QUESTIONS—

Sirs:

I have read Paul Goodman's story and am very confused by it. When he was at the University of Chicago, he was known at various times as an Aristotelian, a radical Marxist, and (at last report) as a neo-Kantian. Is "The Mean, the Maximum and the Minimum" an attempt at a synthesis of them all with a little Nietzsche thrown in or what? I yam wary confoosd. The burden of the thing seems to be that IF YOU HAVE ONE OF THEM YOU HAVE THE OTHER TWO SO WHAT THE HELL.

Maybe some one on the PR staff can help clear things up a bit for me. I don't mind being confused because I usually am but I resent being deliberately confused by a work of supposedly lucid art. I don't mind being confused by art that doesn't put forth any claims for lucidity. Goodman's story does. At least it seems to. I'm confused about that too.

Yours truly,
JACKSON MACLOW

Chicago, Ill.

—AND AN AUTHOR REPLIES

Dear MacLow,

I trust I was, among the other things, just an old fashioned Kantian, and not a "neo" anything. Whatever confusion I may, as a bad teacher, have spread with these admirable doctrines, I can assure you that any contradictions among them have managed to thrive in my own head without the least pause to my animal spirits; these ideas, and even some others, exist there without the hopeless feeling that none of them can be right, but rather with a suspicion that all of them are right altogether.

I am surprised that you don't mind being confused by art, for clarity is a part of beauty. (To my taste my own story is a little muddy.) But if you mean by "lucidity" a communication of maxims already familiar to you, then I should hope no art is lucid; for where is the Enigma, where is the inspiration of the holy spirit? In my small triptych I explored the 3 ethical principles in concrete situations where it has been my experience that they apply, making of course such poetic idealizations as seemed legitimate. Isn't it peculiar, isn't it even incorrect, to attempt to assign a formula simpler than those details?

PAUL GOODMAN

"THE CULTURAL FRONT"

Sirs:

This week, two members of your editorial board informed me that because of your plan to print a new column by Dwight Macdonald as well as your intention to establish new departments and features, you will no longer be able to

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afford the space in every issue of PARTISAN REVIEW for my short column, *The Cultural F* It was suggested that I rotate my with these new features. Un plan it would appear in every othe Frankly, I do not think that it is hile to write a column three times a ear. Your decision against continuing my column as a regular feature in every issue of the magazine releases me from the obligation I assumed when I agreed to conduct *The Cultural Front* for you. I am therefore discontinuing this column entirely. However, I shall be willing from time to time, to contribute to your magazine if the occasion arises. I ask that you print this statement *in your next issue* for the benefit of those readers who may have been interested in my column.

Sincerely yours,
JAMES T. FARRELL

We are very sorry that Mr. Farrell does not wish to write his column every other issue and we hope that occasions will *soon arise when he will contribute again to* PARTISAN REVIEW.—THE EDITORS.

"PLEASANT SURPRISES" COMING

Sirs:

In renewing my subscription to PARTISAN REVIEW may I say I think it is a pity that you have decided to change its name to *The Forties* or anything else. It reminds me too unpleasantly of the London *Daily Worker's* gesture of removing the hammer-&-sickle emblem from its title-heading a few years back, with all its hypocritical aftermath. 'Partisan' has a militant uncompromising air which may lose you a number of readers, but which nonetheless implies, at least to me, a determination to pursue an unsheeplike line among the scurrying, baaing flocks. I foresee from it a step towards toeing the line —but it is the thin edge of the vicarious wedge.

Writing as one of the European minor-apes, may I plead for a page or two of topical commentary in *each* issue to help us maintain sense in this asylum? In spite of the fact that I am 75% in disagreement with your Trotskyist line, I may end by saying that I find as much sense in your journal as in any other I hav ever read—and I read five languages.

Very truly yours,
ROGER CUSACH

Dublin, Eire

P. S. You underestimate (thank Goodness) the revolutionary drift in Europe and are led astray by the facade of capitalism busily strangling itself in England. You are in for some pleasant surprises.

PARTISAN'S PARTISANS

Letters are still coming in protesting the proposal—by now definitely abandoned—to change our name to "The Forties." P ly every one prefers PARTISAN REVIEW*—though some make interesting suggestions for other names. We print some comments below.*—EDITORS.

You could call the review *The Bias* or even *On the Bias,* but why change the present excellent name, which is serious, dignified, and indicates *a* point of view and not *one* point of view, than which nothing is more to be desired in a magazine at this time?—'A PARTISAN READER,' New York City.

I haven't had time yet to read all of the last issue; what I've read so far has been excellent. I herewith put in my nickel's worth on the problem of the title. PARTISAN REVIEW is a better title than any so far suggested, if for no other reason than that both the name and the magazine have now become known to the sort of people who have to have a long, long time before any idea filters through. . . . If you changed the name, persons discussing the magazine would say, "I was reading something aloud to Aunt Lillian last night from *The Forties*—you know, it used to be PARTISAN REVIEW, you remember, sure you do," etc. Conversation would become increasingly Jamesian and tortuous and render society therefore more chaotic. And I'm sure we don't wish to encourage *that.*—W. K., Denver, Colorado.

I for one do not look with favor upon your proposal to change the name of PR. It is not only *a* partisan review; it is *the* partisan review, and I think you ought to

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glory in the name of earwig. The name means something and has come to stand for a definite and very excellent set of critical standards. Why don't you leave well enough alone?—J. T. A., Fayetteville, Arkansas.

I suggest *Relevant* as a new title for your magazine, to distinguish it from what is irrelevant and beside the point.—W. W., Houston, Texas.

Concerning the changing of the magazine name: PARTISAN REVIEW is still better than *The Forties*. However, if you *must* change it, why not to *Contemporary?* In the 50's and 60's of the last century, the *Contemporary* (*'Sovremennik'*) was in Russia the magazine of Chernyshevski and Dobroliukov, who were inspirers of Pisarev.—'A READER,' New Haven, Conn.

The Forties is still a mouse in the hole, as far as I'm concerned. I still like my *Vital Point*, and I like *American Criterion*. . . . If you've got to change names, how about *Left-Angle?* But I fear left and right aren't going to be very acceptable these coming years.—L. S. D., Augusta, Georgia.

And please *don't* change the name of PARTISAN REVIEW. *The Forties*=warm beer.—E. C., Philadelphia, Pa.

Does the name of a magazine affect its direction and purpose? If not, I don't care what name you give your magazine, but please continue to be *partisan* to honesty and keen criticism. With a proper quotient of humility, these qualities are not incompatible.—A. P., Hennepin, Illinois.

MUSICAL CONTROVERSY

Sirs:

I am goaded to write this note as I enclose my subscription check because of Clement Greenberg's "Toward a Newer Laocoon," in a recent issue of PARTISAN REVIEW. I am always greatly surprised at the American intellectual's unfamiliarity with music. Greenberg is wrong in practically every point he makes about music. For instance, "Music was saved from the fate of the pictorial arts in the 17th and 18th centuries by its comparatively rudimentary technique and the relative shortness of its development as a formal art, etc." Most of the music in the 17th and 18th centuries had either a literary or pictorial basis—all the late madrigal schools of each country, Purcell, Montverde, Gabrieli, Rameau, Lulli, Couperin, even Bach who composed some 200 cantatas (settings of texts that are frequently illustrated in the music in very descriptive ways), Handel. After Bach in the late eighteenth century the Mozart and Haydn period provides an overwhelming number of operas, masses and even descriptive pieces (Haydn's *Creation* and Seasons). There are, to be sure, many 'abstract' pieces written by Bach, but in his case at least almost all of them were either dance music, 'Klavierübungen' or decorative background music for church use. Mozart and Haydn's 'abstract' music is also decorative in the sense that it was written as a vehicle to show off some soloist or some princely orchestra to best advantage, revealing that the orchestra could play in any one of the six or seven styles of composition which were used in dramatic music.

These are only a few of the objections that come up in my mind at every mention of music in this article.

I subscribe, because of articles like Hook's on Maritain or Zabel's on Rimbaud and Macdonald's on National Defense. God knows why a musician should bother to take all these literary philosophical and political ideas seriously when the bright people take so little interest in music.

Yours,
ELLIOTT CARTER

St. John's College,
Annapolis, Md.

Mr. Carter starts out rather frighteningly, and it is a relief to discover that I need not over-tax my knowledge of music in order to argue the one point of disagreement which he brings up. I was well aware that "Most of the music in the 17th and 18th centuries had either a literary or pictorial basis, etc." But one cannot assume that because the occasion and setting of an art called for the literary and pictorial that that art succeeded in achieving them. The very point I wanted to

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make was that however much music at this time tried to describe and illustrate it could not do so independently, no matter what form it took. Without action or text it remains an abstract art, one of self-sufficient forms capable of being enjoyed for their own sake. Mr. Carter seems to think that I conceive of Bach and Händel as consciously composing absolute music, when I know as well as he does that they did not even dream of making such a distinction.

The difference between 17th and 18th century music and program music is that the first, although it attempted to describe and illustrate, was not sophisticated enough to violate its formal patterns—any more than a Haida Indian can disregard certain unrealistic conventions when he depicts a bear on a totem pole —while the second was désabusé *enough to seek onomatopoeia in the most immediate sense. Whether or not program music succeeds in describing and narrating, it tries to so do* independently, *something which 17th and 18th century music attempts only rarely.*—C.G.

ZASULITCH'S DEED—A CORRECTION

Sirs:

According to Dwight Macdonald's article on Trotsky, Vera Zasulitch assassinated the Czar's prime minister in 1878. Not so. She killed no one. Her deed was shooting the prefect of St. Petersburg, General Trepov; he was only wounded.

Too many students of the history of the revolutionary movement are deficient in a sound knowledge of Russian history.

(Unsigned postcard mailed in New Haven, Conn.)

—My anonymous correspondent is correct: Zasulitch shot General Trepov, not the prime minister. I relied, without further check, on Max Eastman's Leon Trotsky: The Portrait of a Youth, *which refers (p. 173) to "Vera Zasulitch, the heroine of the Terror, who had shot the Czar's prime minister for having her comrades flogged." And I seem to have turned "shot" into "killed" on my own hook.* —D. M.

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